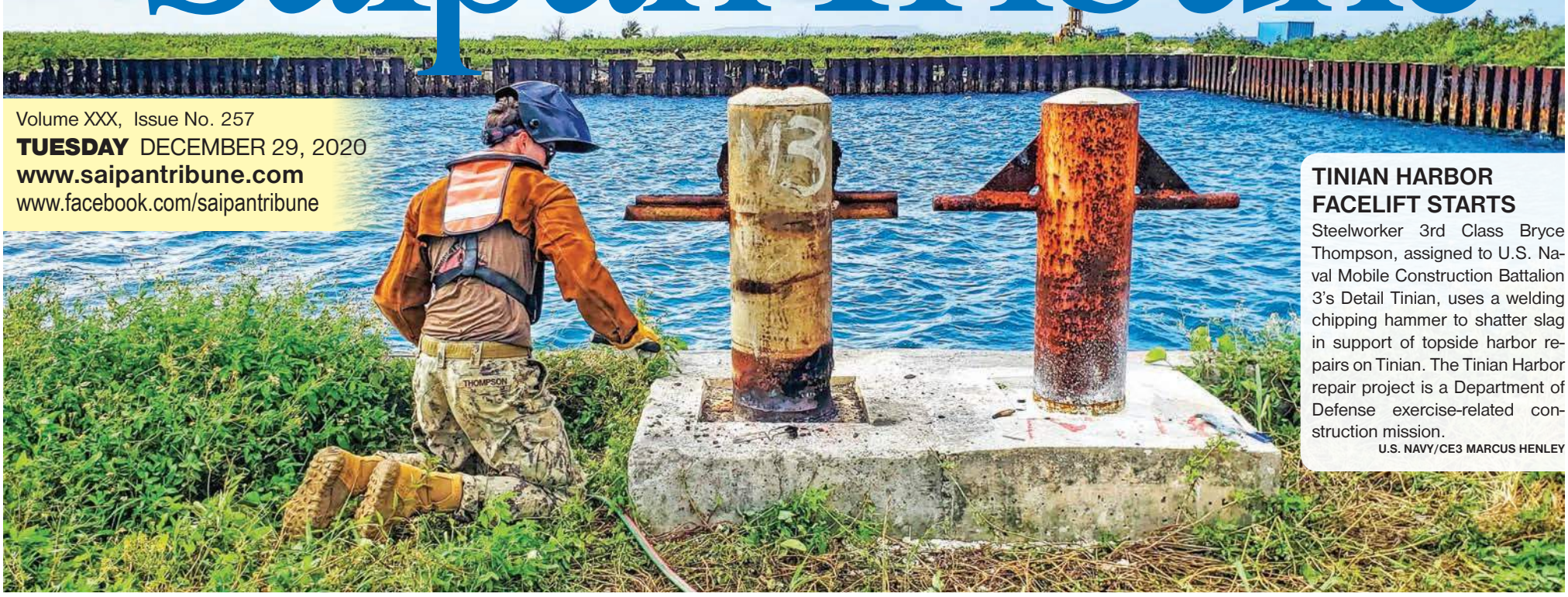
Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

75¢

Volume XXX, Issue No. 257
TUESDAY DECEMBER 29, 2020
www.saipantribune.com
www.facebook.com/saipantribune

Audit finds DPL noncompliant with law on operations fund. PAGE 2
Kilili gets COVID-19 vaccine shot. PAGE 5



TINIAN HARBOR FACELIFT STARTS

Steelworker 3rd Class Bryce Thompson, assigned to U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3's Detail Tinian, uses a welding chipping hammer to shatter slag in support of topside harbor repairs on Tinian. The Tinian Harbor repair project is a Department of Defense exercise-related construction mission.

U.S. NAVY/CE3 MARCUS HENLEY

Over 1,700 vaccinated so far

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As of Dec. 28, over 1,700 frontliners and *man'amko* in the CNMI have been inoculated with the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. That number is expected to go up even more after the CNMI received the first batch of the COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna Inc.

» 400 Moderna vaccines arrive

The Moderna vaccines, which total 400 doses, arrived last Dec. 26 on a United Airlines flight. These vaccines will be sent to Rota and Tinian, and will be allocated to the those on Saipan who are homebound. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are the only ones that have so far obtained Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug

See OVER on Page 4

A vial of the COVID-19 vaccine from Moderna sits on a table top at Rose Medical Center Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2020, in Denver. AP

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Dec. 28, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,269	12	7,281
Recovered	6,743	165	6,908
Active	240	12	252
Deaths	121	0	121
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			99,551

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	122	0	122
Traced via Travel Screening	96	0	96
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			133

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Trump signs COVID relief bill

By JILL COLVIN, LISA MASCARO and ANDREW TAYLOR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)—President Donald Trump signed a $900-billion pandemic relief package Sunday, ending days of drama over his refusal to accept the bipartisan deal that will deliver long-sought cash to businesses and individuals and avert a federal government shutdown.

The massive bill includes $1.4 trillion to fund govern-

See TRUMP on Page 4

Crash sends 1 to ICU and 5 to DOC

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A car crash in Tanapag last Christmas Eve sent one individual to the Intensive Care Unit of the Commonwealth Health Center, while five others were booked and detained at the Department of Corrections.

According to a source who requested anonymity, one of

See CRASH on Page 4

DOL expects to hear from USDOL about reopening PUA

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor hopes to hear from the U.S Department of Labor as soon as next week on the guidelines for reopening the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program.

Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente said her department has already reached out to USDOL regarding guidelines to reopen the program, soon after President Donald Trump signed the COVID-19 relief bill that would provide an additional 11 weeks of unem-

See DOL on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Bes House of Chicken along Beach Road in Garapan introduces itself with a soft opening.

PAGE 11

NATION
The man believed responsible for the Christmas Day bombing in Nashville died in the blast.

PAGE 12

LIFE & STYLE
"Wonder Woman 1984" posts the best box office debut of the pandemic, opening with $16.7 million.

PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Audit finds DPL noncompliant with law on operations fund

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An auditing firm's independent report found that the Department of Public Lands is noncompliant with a public law that requires the creation of a DPL Operations Fund. Without that, DPL is unable to produce reliable and relevant financial information, the audit said. In response, DPL Secretary Marianne Concepcion-Teregeyo said DPL and the Department of Finance are now working on creating a separate operations fund account to have DPL revenues collected deposited into this account.

The Office of the Public Auditor hired Deloitte to audit DPL's internal control over financial reporting and its compliance for the fiscal year that ended on Sept. 30, 2019. The Deloitte report, which OPA released last Dec. 22, said the results or their tests disclosed instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

According to Deloitte & Touche LLC, the DPL Operations Fund—as required by Public Law 15-02—shall be maintained by Finance and DPL is required to deposit all revenues it receives in such Fund and all of DPL's operational expenses shall be paid from that Fund.

DPL's noncompliance with P.L. 15-02 was among certain deficiencies in internal control that the auditor considers to be material weaknesses.

Deloitte said an effective system of internal control over financial reporting includes maintenance of a separate general ledger system that records transactions and generates reliable and relevant financial information. Deloitte said DPL has not maintained a separate general ledger system since fiscal year 2007. Specifically, the auditor said, revenues received by DPL are not deposited in the DPL Operations Fund. The auditor said a general ledger for DPL transactions is maintained by Finance, which is not reconciled or monitored by Finance or DPL. Deloitte said cash transactions, received and disbursed at DPL, are summarized in cash receipt and disbursement journals, which are not recorded in the Finance general ledger.

Deloitte said journal vouchers posted to Finance's general by Finance personnel are not approved by DPL management. The auditor said receivables, accounts payable, accruals and unearned revenues are not reconciled in Finance's general ledger.

The auditor said DPL did not implement available system controls over the financial reporting process and monitoring control procedures are not established to determine the accuracy and completeness of disbursements processed at Finance.

The auditor recommended that DPL comply with P.L. 15-02 and monitor and reconcile transactions with Finance. The auditor also recommends that DPL establish monitoring control procedures over disbursements, perform periodic reconciliations with Finance to verity the accuracy and completeness of disbursements processed and reconcile balances maintained in Finance's general ledger.

These material weaknesses are not new and were reported as findings in the audits of DPL from fiscal years 2010 through 2018, Deloitte noted.

In DPL's responses to the audit, Concepcion-Teregeyo said personnel and other operation expenditures are monitored and reconciled every time reports are received from Finance.

She said payroll timesheets are verified by the DPL timekeeper, certified by the DPL Finance director and approved by her and the Finance and Accounting director prior to processing checks by the CNMI Treasury.

She said vendor and payroll checks are reconciled against DPL reports to ensure they are accurate and properly accounted for and reimbursed to the CNMI General Fund biweekly for payroll and the 15th and 30th for other operation expenses.

Concepcion-Teregeyo said adjustments and requests for supplemental checks are verified by the DPL Finance director and approved by her with justification before being submitted to the CNMI Finance director.

On revenue and receipts, Deloitte said tests of 79 cash receipts for long-term lease contracts of public lands and temporary permits noted that audited financial statements were not provided for 23 receipts related to contracts and permits requiring such documents.

Deloitte said financial statements were not provided for six receipts related to contracts and permits requiring such documents.

The auditor said that for eight receipts, financial statements were not provided within 45 days after the end of the calendar year.

The auditor said a signed permit extension was not provided for the lease period tested.

Deloitte said a permit has not been renewed since 2016 for a lessee, which is under holdover status.

Deloitte said the cause of the condition is the lack of monitoring procedures to determine which contracts and/or permits require audited financial statements or financial statements.

The auditor said permits are not timely reviewed for expiration.

Moreover, the auditor said, lease agreements should be reexamined for consistency in meeting required payment terms.

The effect of the condition, Deloitte said, is the potential underpayment of lease revenues and collections on invalid permits and leases.

Deloitte recommends that management update lease contracts and permits and enforce lease provisions.

The auditor said monitoring procedures for contract and/or permits that require financial statements or audited financial statements was reported as a finding in the audits of DPL for fiscal years 2010 through 2018.

In DPL's response to the issue of 23 receipts, Concepcion-Teregeyo cited several reasons such as audit was ongoing and was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, submitted financial statements that is unaudited by a public accountant certified in the U.S., and some already submitted financial statements.

Concepcion-Teregeyo provided explanations and justifications for some of these findings.

Costa
Terrace Restaurant
Happy New Year!
Celebrate the New Year with family, friends and a delicious buffet at Costa Terrace Restaurant!
Featuring CAB Prime Rib, Seafood on Ice, Roast Suckling Pig, Free Flowing Wine & Beer and more!
NEW YEAR'S EVE
Gala Dinner Buffet
Thursday, Dec 31, 2020 • 6pm—9pm
$40 /Adult | $20 /Child (Ages 6-11)
NEW YEAR'S DAY
Hangover Brunch Buffet
Friday, Jan 1, 2021 • 11am—2pm
$40 /Adult | $20 /Child (Ages 6-11)
NEW YEAR'S DAY
Dinner Buffet
Friday, Jan 1, 2021 • 6pm—9pm
$40 /Adult | $20 /Child (Ages 6-11)
APC
AQUA RESORT CLUB
Saipan
Reservations Recommended
Please call (670) 322-1234 or visit
www.aquaresortsaipan.com

EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

Shane Barro, third from left, and Rinie Fiden, third from right, are recognized as the 2020 McDonald's Employee of the Year last Dec. 23 during the company's Annual Employee Appreciation Party. Barro is the Employee of the Year for the McDonald's Middle Road branch, while Fiden is for the McDonald's Garapan branch. Other in the photo are, from left, Marcia E. Ayuyu, McDonald's owner/operator; Jocelyn R. Asistores, general manager of the Middle Road branch; Ruthzel L. Perez, general manager of the Garapan Branch; Jose C. Ayuyu, president/CEO of McDonald's Guam and Saipan; and Joe E. Ayuyu Jr., vice president, McDonald's Guam and Saipan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Atalig: NMI spent quite a bit to keep everyone safe

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig said the CNMI government did spend "quite a bit" of money to keep the islands safe against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking at a radio news briefing last Thursday, Atalig did not provide figures but stated that those will be highlighted in a yearend report for fiscal year 2020 that he is finalizing. He intends to submit this report to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and to the Legislature this week.

"But just in a general sense, we did have a very challenging year, not only with COVID but also fiscally for our government," he said, adding that many people are out of jobs and are struggling and trying to survive.

"I will have details of my report released next week," he added.

On the second stimulus package, Atalig said vaccinations for the entire community in the CNMI is being funded through this stimulus so they are looking into how much will go to the CNMI.

He said they will work with Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muna's team to see how much can they maximize and get from the millions of dollars allocated for vaccination, distribution, as well as the programs to get the community vaccinated.

Emergency water outage tomorrow

There will be an emergency water service interruption tomorrow, Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020, from 9am to 4pm, for Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in San Roque, Achugao, and Tanapag.

This is due to an 8-inch waterline break located across the Kensington Hotel Saipan in San Roque. Repairs on the waterline is anticipated to be completed by 4pm. Water service to the affected areas will resume soon after.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, proceed with caution and/or take alternative routes during the period of the waterline repair.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at 236-4333 or monitor CUC's Facebook page for updates. ***(PR)***

ATTENTION
Government Employees & Retirees!

SAVE MONEY with the Island Smiles Discount Dental Plan. ENROLL TODAY!

- **Cheapest Price:** $5.00 (Individual Plan), $6.00 (Two-Party Plan) or $7.00 (Family Plan) per bi-weekly allotment. Cheapest dental plan in the CNMI.
- Members receive at LEAST **20%-50% discounts** on all dental procedures. No exceptions!
- **Plan Provider:** Paradise Dental Spa. State-of-the-art, full service General and Cosmetic dental clinic. Most experienced dentists in the CNMI. Really nice people and the coffee pot is always on! Great aircon and free WiFi.

Award-Winning Dentists kind and gentle
DR. NELSON KRUM
DR. RICHARD ARBUCKLE

Paradise Dental Spa

Hawaii Dental Service, Take Care, Calvo's, Cigna, Staywell, and LHI Insurances also accepted. Medicaid patients welcome! Best Aircon on the island, and the coffee pot is always on!

Call 234-4040
Middle Road, Gualo Rai, across from Chong's Refrigeration

Stop by and pick up your enrollment packet or send an email request to paradisedentalsaipan@gmail.com

www.paradisedentalspa.com instagram.com/paradisedentalspa facebook.com/paradisedentalspa

AMAZING PHONES
AFFORDABLE PRICES
Samsung Galaxy A11
FREE*
Samsung Galaxy A21s
$29*
Earn 500 PACIFICPOINTS
ite.net itecnmi itecnmi
Terms and conditions apply. Offer valid from 12/7 - 12/31, 2020. FREE Samsung Galaxy A11 and Samsung Galaxy A21s for $29 available only with a 24-month agreement on the $30 Standard Postpaid Plan. Subject to credit check. See stores or visit ite.net for details. To earn 500 Bonus PACIFICPOINTS, must be a PACIFICPOINTS member. Valid from 12/4 - 12/31, 2020. Bonus points will be awarded 2-3 businesses days after approval of new service activation or renewal. Visit pacificpoints.com for details.
SHOP SMART. SHOP ONLINE. ite.net
IT&E

High court dismisses felon's appeal, returns case to Superior Court

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Supreme Court has dismissed the appeal of a felon regarding his parole revocation and instead returned the case to the Superior Court for further proceedings.

The high court dismissed the appeal of Shawn C. Appleby regarding his parole revocation, but remanded the case back to the trial court of Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja in order to hear the reasoning behind the trial court's recent order to dismiss Appleby's lawsuit.

"Appleby's objection that we should instead grant the appeal because where the parties agree on the basis of the appeal, as here, the solution is not to dismiss it, but to grant it. While we dispose of this matter through a motion to dismiss rather than granting the appeal, we reach the same result Appleby seeks: remand to hear the merits of the writ," the high court stated in its opinion.

Naraja stated in a previous order that the trial court lacked jurisdiction and dismissed the lawsuit of Appleby against officials of the Department of Corrections and Board of Parole without prejudice, finding his application for a writ of habeas corpus moot.

However, Chief Justice Alexandro Castro, Justice John Manglona, and Justice Perry Inos stated that the judge did not provide any reasoning in his final judgment bearing on the writ or its mootness.

According to the court, the record lacks discussion of the issues or analysis of the applicable law and it is uncertain whether the trial court was correct in dismissing the case because the record was not fully developed.

Appleby, a parolee, was arrested on March 25, 2020, for parole violations.

Appleby exercised his right to a preliminary hearing to determine probable cause and on April 13, a hearing officer determined there was probable cause.

On June 15, the Parole Board issued a notice of final revocation hearing and scheduled the hearing on July 10 at the Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

On June 19, Appleby, through assistant public defender Jean Pierre Nogues, filed a complaint with the Superior Court, naming Department of Corrections Commissioner Wally Villagomez and CNMI Board of Parole chair Ramon B. Camacho as defendants.

Appleby wanted the court to issue an order stopping the revocation hearing that was scheduled for July 10. Appleby also filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus.

In his ruling, Naraj said at the time the petition for a writ of habeas corpus was filed, the final revocation hearing had not taken place.

The final revocation order was issued on July 17.

On March 24, 2020, the Parole Board found that Appleby engaged in criminal conduct by committing the crimes of assault and battery and disturbing the peace by hitting another parolee three times while in a house and then chasing her down the street and pushing her to the ground.

Appleby's parole application was granted in September 2019.

Appleby has served about 24 years of his 40-year sentence for killing Byung Ok Suh in November 1996 after robbing the victim's store in San Antonio. In 1999 and 2007, Appleby was convicted for escape, adding two more years to his 40-year sentence.

Torres thankful to Trump for signing 2nd stimulus

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres thanked President Donald Trump yesterday for signing the $900-billion pandemic relief package that will provide cash to businesses and individuals.

Torres said he knows Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig will expedite the process in releasing the second stimulus checks to get the money into the hands of people. The governor said he wants the stimulus out as soon as possible.

The bill, which Trump signed yesterday, includes $600 checks for Americans who earn less than $75,000 per year.

The massive bill also includes $1.4 trillion to fund government operations through September 2021.

Atalig said Thursday that his team is on standby, but prepared once Trump signs the second stimulus bill into law.

Atalig said they are communicating with their Internal Revenue Service partners in trying to get the plan in place.

The secretary noted that they had a very successful plan in the first distribution of the stimulus package.

TRUMP

From Page 1

ment agencies through September and contains other end-of-session priorities such as money for cash-starved transit systems and an increase in food stamp benefits.

Trump announced the signing in a statement Sunday night that spoke of his frustrations with the COVID-19 relief for including only $600 checks to most Americans instead of the $2,000 that his fellow Republicans rejected. He also complained about what he considered unnecessary spending by the government at large. But Trump's eleventh-hour objections created turmoil because lawmakers had thought he was supportive of the bill, which had been negotiated for months with White House input.

"I will sign the Omnibus and Covid package with a strong message that makes clear to Congress that wasteful items need to be removed," Trump said in the statement.

While the president insisted he would send Congress "a redlined version" with items to be removed under the rescission process, those are merely suggestions to Congress. The bill, as signed, would not necessarily be changed.

Lawmakers now have breathing room to continue debating whether the relief checks should be as large as the president has demanded. The Democratic-led House supports the larger checks and is set to vote on the issue Monday, but it's expected to be ignored by the Republican-held Senate where spending faces opposition.

Republicans and Democrats swiftly welcomed Trump's decision to sign the bill into law.

"The compromise bill is not perfect, but it will do an enormous amount of good for struggling Kentuckians and Americans across the country who need help now," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. "I thank the President for signing this relief into law."

Democrats are promising more aid to come once President-elect Joe Biden takes office, but Republicans are signaling a wait-and-see approach.

CRASH

From Page 1

the six passengers involved in the vehicle collision on Christmas Eve remains in the ICU after sustaining major injuries as a result of the crash.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Dre Pangelinan said the other five were arrested and detained at DOC.

According to a DPS press release, DPS received a call at about 8:45pm on Dec. 24, reporting a white Toyota Prius that was driving recklessly through the village of Tanapag while the vehicle's passengers were yelling profanities.

The individuals were reportedly southbound so police were dispatched to areas headed south.

One officer in Garapan noticed a vehicle heading south along Beach Road that matched the description in the APB, or all-points bulletin.

As the officer attempted to initiate a violator stop, the vehicle suddenly sped up and attempted to flee so the officer notified Central that the vehicle continued to pick-up speed along Beach Road.

Police reported that the vehicle continued traveling southbound until it struck another vehicle traveling in the same direction while also hitting a pathway street lamp, before turning turtle.

Officers reported that the overturned vehicle was along Beach Road near Char's Market in Oleai.

Immediately after the crash, police saw five of the six individuals fleeing the scene on foot.

The vehicle's operator, Benster Saimon Benjamin Jr., 18, was arrested on multiple charges, including reckless driving, driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol, minor consuming liquor, and giving a false report to a police officer.

Atan Komaki,18, was arrested for minor consuming liquor and giving a false report to a police officer.

The three other passengers, who were all juveniles, were arrested for minor consuming liquor. The one who landed at the ICU was not identified.

OVER

From Page 1

Administration.

The CNMI is rolling out the vaccination process in three phases, with Phase 1 focusing on health care workers, first responders, and the elderly (*man'amko*). Next in line are those with underlying health conditions, who are recognized as among those at high risk of COVID-19.

While the CNMI has not run out of vaccines, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña reminds the public that only the people who fall within the Phase 1 inclusion criteria can get vaccinated right now.

Last week, Phase 1A included the *man'amko*, (65 years old and above) and first responders to many CNMI emergencies and not just COVID-19. These included personnel from CHCC, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, as well as other emergency service agencies that respond to any emergency.

Over the weekend, CHCC expanded their age requirement for COVID-19 vaccinations and is accepting walk-ins for people who are over 60 years old. Additionally, there is no age limit for those who are first responders and health care workers.

Phase 1B will be open on Tuesday and includes CNMI government employees, including COVID-19 contract tracers, CNMI elected officials and judges, federal employees, judges, education workers, telecommunication employees, and faith-based officials. Those who meet the criteria will be given a schedule that will be posted on CHCC's Facebook page to ensure a space is still available for those in Phase 1A.

Muña disclosed that they have been turning away those who don't fall within the inclusion criteria or are not going to be able to receive the second dose. The Pfizer vaccines are a two-shot injection, with the second injection administered 21 days after the first injection.

Muña said the public should continue to stay patient and vigilant as CHCC continues to get the vaccines to the arms of the CNMI population.

Muña told *Saipan Tribune* that when individuals are turned away, they're not saying these people can't get the vaccines. Muna pointed out that, with the limited number of vaccines that are available right now, they're just making sure that those in the inclusion criteria get injected first.

Also, Muña said, they want to make sure that the *man'amko*, who likely need assistance to register, get the opportunity to fit into the scheduled vaccinations. "As allocations are given to the CNMI based on our population, we will be expanding the inclusion criteria," she assured.

Meanwhile, the Moderna vaccines are expected to roll out on the week of Jan. 4. Since the Pfizer vaccines were rolled out for Saipan residents and the Moderna vaccines will be rolled out on Rota and Tinian, Rota and Tinian residents will need to wait until the vaccines are rolled out in their respective islands to ensure they get the same brand for doses 1 and 2.

"We acknowledge that there may have been periods of waiting, confusion, and frustration during the first week of COVID-19 vaccinations," said CHCC in a statement, "but we are working to improve the process of making sure that the vaccination process will be smoother and ask for everyone's patience and understanding."

DOL

From Page 1

ployment assistance to those whose livelihoods were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Benavente said they have yet to receive a response from USDOL since it is the holidays season, but she expects to get a response as early as next week.

Benavente

Benavente said once they hear back from USDOL regarding the guidelines, the department will start the process of reopening the portal.

However, Benavente said there is still no set date when applicants can start applying for PUA again because CNMI DOL still needs to apply for the PUA grant, aside from receiving guidelines.

Fortunately, Benavente said, she expects reopening the PUA program to be easier and faster this time around compared to the first instance since they are now familiar with the system.

In addition, Benavente said, with PUA Round 2, the application process will be solely online because they've learned from the first round that having both manual and online applications caused a lot of delays.

Benavente said it is great news for the CNMI that Trump signed the bill into law because not only will CNMI locals continue to receive benefits to help them weather the pandemic, but workers under the CNMI-Only Transitional Worker Program and other contract workers are now also included in the bill.

"It's really amazing for the CNMI. It's going to help a lot of people who are still unemployed. It's going to help a lot of families who are still struggling. We are very fortunate that President Trump signed the bill. We're just waiting for instructions from USDOL and we will announce the reopening of the portal when we are ready," she said.

The first round of PUA benefits expired last Dec. 26, and although many have yet to receive their benefits from the first go around, Benavente said over 80% of eligible applicants have already received their benefits.

Kilili gets COVID-19 vaccine shot

At the request of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) received an injection of COVID-19 vaccine last Saturday.

CHCC officials asked Sablan to take the shot to show the public he has trust in the medicine's safety and effectiveness. "With the eventual goal to have everyone in the Marianas vaccinated, it is important to build widespread confidence in the new vaccine," said a statement issued by Sablan's office.

The Marianas received an initial allocation of 4,875 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine Thursday. This first shipment is comparable to what Vermont, Wyoming, and other smaller population states are receiving.

CHCC has been working for months to be ready. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines must be stored at ultra-low temperatures and two shots are required, 21 days apart. So CHCC has to closely schedule both the initial shot and the follow-up.

"CHCC has done impressive work to protect the people of the Marianas during this health crisis," Sablan said, "and to be prepared to receive and administer the vaccine."

CHCC plans to give priority to health care workers, first responders, and high-risk patients. But, during a Dec. 9 briefing on vaccine preparedness and the COVID-19 response in the Marianas, CHCC officials asked Sablan to volunteer to be vaccinated to demonstrate the vaccine's safety. "I agreed to take this new medicine, as long as everyone in the first-priority group is taken care of," the delegate said.

Following recommendations from two independent advisory panels, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized the distribution and use of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine on Dec. 11. A second vaccine from manufacturer Moderna has already obtained emergency use authorization, which will make even more doses available for distribution.

In this photo posted in his Facebook account last Dec. 26, 2020, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is injected with the COVID-19 vaccine at the Commonwealth Health Center's MCAT.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Even after vaccinations begin, it will still be necessary to continue to practice the "3 Ws": Wear a mask; Wash your hands; Watch your distance by standing at least 6 feet apart from the next person, especially when indoors. This is because individuals who have taken the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, while having 95% certainty they will not get the disease, could still transmit the coronavirus to others.

"We have to continue all the safety practices we have learned over the last year," Sablan said. "And everyone will need to be vaccinated, if we want to return our lives and economy to normal in 2021." ***(PR)***

Trump signs 3 oceans-related bills into law

WASHINGTON, D.C.— President Donald J. Trump recently signed into law three important oceans-related bills passed by Congress: the National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2020, the Digital Coast Act, and the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act.

"These three pieces of legislation are the latest actions by President Trump to support ocean health and technology," said U.S. Department of the Interior assistant secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech, "all of which are critical to and complement the work that we do at the Department of the Interior with other federal partners in support of ocean, coastal, and marine resources health for the benefit of all Americans."

Trump signed the three bills into law on Dec. 18, 2020:

■ The S. 910, National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2020, now Public Law 116-221, reauthorized the National Sea Grant College Program through fiscal year 2024, through which the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) supports university-based programs that focus on studying, conserving, and effectively using U.S. coastal resources. It also modified the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Program.

■ The S.1069, Digital Coast Act, now Public Law No. 116-223, revised the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Digital Coast program for critical coastal management and data tracking for the ocean and the Great Lakes coasts.

■ The S.1982, Save Our Seas 2.0 Act, now Public Law No. 116-224, established a nongovernmental Marine Debris Foundation and a prize competition for the "Genius Prize for Save Our Seas Innovation"; increases efforts to engage, cooperate, and coordinate with other governmental and nongovernmental entities to raise international awareness of plastic waste and combat marine debris; and creates infrastructure grant programs to be administered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Domenech serves as member of the White House Ocean Policy Committee and Co-Chair of the White House Ocean Resource Management Sub-committee. Domenech is also the Co-Chair of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. ***(PR)***

UOG trains 24 nurse aides for pandemic response

Twenty-four new nursing aides are now assisting in the pandemic response, following a training program through the University of Guam.

The university's School of Health last month graduated the first class of its Temporary Nursing Assistant Program, a program developed to help address the critical shortage of nursing assistants during the pandemic.

As of Oct. 22, Health Services of the Pacific, Guam Memorial Hospital, and Guam Regional Medical City reported a combined shortage of 55 certified nursing assistants, or CNAs.

"In this unprecedented state of emergency, the TNAP is not only addressing a shortage of workers, but it's also providing employment and preparing these individuals for rewarding lifelong careers in health care," said Margaret Hattori-Uchima, dean of the School of Health and project director for the Guam/Micronesia Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program, which is partially funding the program through a federal grant along with the governor's office.

The 24 temporary nursing assistants are now working in the community: 12 at Guam Memorial Hospital, 10 at Guam Regional Medical City, and two at Health Services of the Pacific.

"We are truly grateful for UOG's creative and innovative strategy to grow our health care resources via the TNAP," the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority said in a statement on behalf of its board, executive leadership, medical staff, and employees. "This initiative has contributed significantly to the needs of the hospital, particularly in augmenting and supporting the doctors and nurses in their duties to provide direct patient care services. These CNAs play a very critical role in assisting and fulfilling our mission of delivering excellent care in a safe environment. For this, we are immensely thankful."

Interest in the program was high, with 200 inquiries and 100 applicants. Another class of approximately 30 students will begin the program soon through Guam Community College.

"This has been a tremendous help, and I would like to thank both UOG and GCC for partnering with the health care community to help during this pandemic," said Jennifer R. Cruz, chief nursing officer at GRMC.

The program—an accelerated version of the university's 120-hour Nursing Assistant Training Program that leads to certification as a CAN—requires the trainees to pass a Basic Life Support class and then complete 32 hours of online learning and 16 hours of on-site skills training. The trainees are then tested to demonstrate competency in patient care.

"Patient and staff safety is paramount," Hattori-Uchima said.

The program is approved by the Guam Board of Nurse Examiners and surpasses the eight hours of online training through the American Health Care Association that many states are following to train temporary nurse aides.

Accepted applicants were also required to have a high school diploma or GED, police and court clearances, and a drug screening. ***(UOG)***

Brenda Simmons is one of 24 newly-certified temporary nursing assistants through a training program developed by the University of Guam in response to the pandemic. She is now working in the telemetry unit at Guam Regional Medical City, helping to fill a reported shortage of 55 nursing aides on island.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

AIR FORCE UNIT DONATES

The 624th Aerospace Medicine Flight of the U.S. Air Force Reserve delivered three CPR mannequins on Nov. 24 to the University of Guam's Global Learning & Engagement office and UOG's School of Health. The donated mannequins were used for the recently completed Temporary Nursing Assistant Program that trained 24 new nurse aides to assist in the COVID-19 pandemic response. They will also be used in the university's Certified Nursing Assistant Program and Basic Life Support courses. From left, Carlos Taitano, director; Amanda Blas, administrative supervisor, both with UOG Global Learning & Engagement; Senior Airman Dominique Martos; Capt. Aizza Santos, alumna of the UOG School of Health; Senior Airman Sherwin Nucum; and Senior Airman Aaron Lagrimas.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

Adaza is Bayani Association's president

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Bayani Association inducted a new batch of officers and board at the Philippine Honorary Consulate Office at the Sun Palace Hotel last Dec. 20, during which they named Maria Annamae G. Adaza as the association's new president.

According to Adaza, honorary consul Glicerio "Eli" Arago was the inducting officer.

The organization is now headed by Adaza, Yolanda De Ramos as vice president, Marie Paz Meister as secretary, Ladyvir Canape as treasurer, Mario Mayuga as auditor, Teogenes Mendoza as public information officer, and the safety officers are Ronald De Ramos, Jaime Del Peralta, and Rogelmar Dagahoya.

The board of directors are Leonila Mendoza, Nelida Atalig, Lolita Velasco, Ronald De Ramos, Fernando Enano, Adaza, Canape, Mayuga, and Meister.

Adaza said the members are the backbone of the organization and encouraged everyone to continue to serve the community.

In his message, Arago stated that he is happy with the fellowship within the Bayani Association, for being active in the community, and for helping the Guam-based Philippine Consulate General in its mobile outreach.

Arago recognizes that they are all doing volunteer work but reminded the association's members to take care of their health so they can do more for the community.

Leonila Mendoza, who is a former president, received a certificate of appreciation last Dec. 20. She said that she is so thankful for all the support of the members during her term. Mendoza applauds the association for they were able to assist the needy even during a pandemic.

The short induction ceremony was followed by a Christmas Party at Pepoy's Restaurant in Chalan Kanoa.

PASKONG PINOY

Filcor on Rota held its annual Paskong Pinoy last Dec. 26 at the Leadership Park on Rota, during which a lot of cool prizes were given away in a raffle draw. This was their second year of celebrating Paskong Pinoy. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Filcor was happy to be able to celebrate their program and give back to the community. Filcor president Jesusa Calvo said she is thankful and grateful to all those who helped and supported in making the celebration a successful one.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-CHCC/CGC-DRP-002

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 23, 2020 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"OFFICE LEASE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-CHCC/PH-EHDI-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: JANUARY 6, 2021 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"PROCUREMENT OF DIAGNOSTIC AUTOMATED AUDITORY BRAINSTEM RESPONSE (AABR) MACHINE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: ABEL SABLAN CELIS, Decedent.
CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0395
NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATRIX and NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Date: January 21, 2021
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE ABEL SABLAN CELIS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, Flora Selbart, has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of Abel Sablan Celis and to appoint her as the Administratrix for the Estate. The attorney for Ms. Flora Selbart is Colin M. Thompson.

The hearing on the Petition for Letters of Administration and Appointment of Administratrix is scheduled to be heard on January 21, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the CNMI Supreme Court, Saipan, MP 96950. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors or entities having claims against the Abel Sablan Celis or his estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within **Sixty (60) days** of the first publication, or the claims will be barred. A copy of your claim should also be sent to:

THOMPSON LAW, LLC
2nd Floor J.E. Tenorio Building
PMB 917 Box 10001
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670)233-0777
Fax: (670)233-0776
Email: Cmtlaw@live.com

SO ORDERED this 23rd day of December, 2020.

HON. JUDGE JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

$5K bail for man who allegedly assaulted *man'amko*

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man was assessed a $5,000 cash bail for allegedly assaulting a senior citizen or a *man'amko* during an altercation over land.

Emmanuel Santos Borja, 49, was charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, vandalism, and domestic violence: senior citizen physical abuse and/or mental cruelty after throwing a toaster at a *man'amko* during an argument.

Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan imposed a $5,000 cash bail on Borja.

At the bail hearing last week, Borja was represented by the Public Defender's Office, while assistant attorney general Samantha Vickery appeared for the government.

After the hearing, Borja was remanded to the custody of the Department of Corrections and was ordered to return to court on Dec. 23, at 9am for a preliminary hearing and on Jan. 5 at 9am to be arraigned.

According to the complaint filed by the Department of Public Safety, Borja's wife had confronted a *man'amko* about the land he was giving away for free to a family member. Borja took his wife's side in the argument and got mad at the *man'amko*, police stated. Borja allegedly destroyed the victim's belongings in his garage.

The victim told police that Borja also threw a toaster at him, but he managed to stop it from hitting his body by putting up both his hands, which caused a small scratch on his right hand's middle finger.

Two more companies join NMC's ProaPerks program

Healing Stone Spa is now a proud NMC ProaPerks partner. All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now get a 10% discount at Healing Stone Spa. NMC

Ice Island Coffee & Ice Deserts is now a proud NMC ProaPerks partner. All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now get 10% off any purchase at Ice Island Coffee & Ice Deserts as well as one free handmade nougat with a purchase of any shave snow ice desserts. NMC

Healing Stone Spa and Ice Island Coffee & Ice Deserts are the latest companies to sign on as Northern Marianas College ProaPerks partners, joining many other businesses and organizations in the CNMI that provide exclusive discounts and benefits for Northern Marianas College students, employees, and alumni.

All card-carrying members of the NMC ProaPerks program can now get a 10% discount at Healing Stone Spa and 10% off any purchase at Ice Island Coffee & Ice Deserts as well as one free handmade nougat with a purchase of any shave snow ice desserts.

The NMC ProaPerks program provides exclusive discounts and benefits for Northern Marianas College students, employees, and alumni.

Healing Stone Spa and Ice Island Coffee & Ice Deserts join the growing list of ProaPerks partners such as 153 Restaurant, 4EVER CNMI, Alamo Car Rental, All Star Sporting Goods, Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, Bubba Gump, Caravan of Food, Docomo Pacific, Dollar Days (Garapan), Enterprise Car Rental, Ete Cafe, Fishing Tackle and Sporting Goods, Fork and Spoon, Garapan Restaurant, Great Harvest, Kiki's, National Car Rental, Natural Nail & Spa, NMC Bookstore, Latte Built, Salty's, Saipan Computer Services, Surf Club, Shirley's Coffee Shop, Tribe Marianas, Triple J Motors, The Pacific Supply, and Pena House Boutique.

NMC is in the introductory phase of rolling out the ProaPerks to alumni, students, and employees. For more information, visit marianas.edu/proaperks.

Companies and other interested organizations who would like to become part of the ProaPerks program and take advantage of the buying power of thousands of individuals that include Northern Marianas College alumni, students, and employees, can find more information by emailing proaperks@marianas.edu. ***(NMC)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-21-009

Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified and experienced entities for a turn-key design and implementation of two SCADA systems and two additives at Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The award of this project is under the Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-RFP-21-009, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System for Power Plant No.1, Lower Base, Saipan"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 5, 2021.** Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 22, 2020** to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

GRANITE®

Granite Construction Co Guam has employment opportunites for the following trades for a project located in **Saipan CNMI**:

Foremen (5)
Carpenters (15)
Masons (10)
Ironworkers (10)
Laborers (10)

Project: FEMA Permanent Housing Construction, Saipan CNMI

Only U.S Qualified Workers Will Be Considered

Please pick up an application at
Room Number 239 at the Surfrider Hotel Resort,
Chalan Kanoa, Beach Road, Saipan.

Hours of Operation: 7:00 am to 4:00 pm
Telephone: 670-235-7873

Deadline to apply is December 30, 2020

Granite Construction Co Guam is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer of Minorities, Females, Protected Veterans, Individuals With Disabilities and is a Drug-Alcohol Free Work Place.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXX, Issue No. 257

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Justice for Lockerbie: 32 years after the mass murder on Pan Am Flight 103, feds strike

On Dec. 21, 32 years to the day after 270 people were murdered in the bombing of a jet traveling from London to New York, federal prosecutors charged the man who copped to building the explosive device that brought down Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. Credit the Justice Department under Attorney General Bill Barr, who kicked off his first stint as AG in 1991 by charging two other plotters, for seeing through the investigation on behalf of 190 Americans killed.

That Abu Agela Mas'ud Kheir Al-Marimi, a Libyan intelligence official, now stands accused of a capital crime is due to federal authorities who made a specific, concerted effort last year to close the loop on long-languishing counterterrorism investigations; that push uncovered a 2012 confession to Libyan law enforcement by Mas'ud.

It is also a tribute to the aching heart and exhaustive work of Ken Dornstein, a college student in 1988 when his older brother David was among the murder victims. Dornstein, who went on to become a documentarian, plunged himself into the facts of the case—zeroing in on Mas'ud and discovering that he was being held in a Libyan prison.

The urgent imperative now is extraditing Mas'ud here to face swift and sure justice. The two men who earlier stood trial for the murders—in the Netherlands, under Scottish law—escaped full punishment. One was acquitted. The other, Abdelbasset Al-Megrahi, was convicted in 2001, then in 2009 shamefully granted compassionate release before his death in 2012.

Last week marked the end of Barr's second act leading the DOJ. To say the least, he has not always behaved honorably in the position. But his final acts—flatly rebutting Donald Trump's anti-democratic nonsense and bringing a terrorist who long evaded consequences to justice—have been his noblest ones.

© 2020 *New York Daily News*

Pell Grant expansion opens doors to higher ed

This year's pandemic-fueled economic downturn has not been felt equally throughout the working population. Rather, it has painfully illustrated that jobs requiring a postsecondary credential tend not only to pay better but to also be more resilient.

See JUSTICE on Next Page

The silver lining of 2020

By TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg News

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution. His books include Big Business: A Love Letter to an American Anti-Hero.

For obvious reasons, 2020 will not go down as a good year. At the same time, it has brought more scientific progress than any year in recent memory—and these advances will last long after COVID-19 as a major threat is gone.

Two of the most obvious and tangible signs of progress are the mRNA vaccines now being distributed across America and around the world. These vaccines appear to have very high levels of efficacy and safety, and they can be produced more quickly than more conventional vaccines. They are the main reason to have a relatively optimistic outlook for 2021. The mRNA technology also may have broader potential, for instance by helping to mend damaged hearts.

Other advances in the biosciences may prove no less stunning. A very promising vaccine candidate against malaria, perhaps the greatest killer in human history, is in the final stages of testing. Advances in vaccine technology have created the real possibility of a universal flu vaccine, and work is proceeding on that front. New CRISPR techniques appear on the verge of vanquishing sickle-cell anemia, and other CRISPR methods have allowed scientists to create a new smartphone-based diagnostic test that would detect viruses and offer diagnoses within half an hour.

It has been a good year for artificial intelligence as well. GPT-3 technology allows for the creation of remarkably human-like writing of great depth and complexity. It is a major step toward the creation of automated entities that can react in very human ways. DeepMind, meanwhile, has used computational techniques to make major advances in protein folding. This is a breakthrough in biology that may lead to the easier discovery of new pharmaceuticals.

One general precondition behind many of these advances is the decentralized access to enormous computing power, typically through cloud computing. China seems to be progressing with a photon method for quantum computing, a development that is hard to verify but could prove to be of great importance.

Computational biology, in particular, is booming. The Moderna vaccine mRNA was designed in two days, and without access to COVID-19 itself, a remarkable achievement that would not have been possible only a short while ago. This likely heralds the arrival of many other future breakthroughs from computational biology.

Internet access itself will be spreading. Starlink, for example, has a plausible plan to supply satellite-based internet connections to the entire world.

It also has been a good year for progress in transportation.

Driverless vehicles appeared to be stalled, but Walmart will be using them on some truck deliveries in 2021. Boom, a startup that is pushing to develop feasible and affordable supersonic flight, now has a valuation of over $1 billion, with prototypes expected next year. SpaceX achieved virtually every launch and rocket goal it had announced for the year. Toyota and other companies have announced major progress on batteries for electric vehicles, and the related products are expected to debut in 2021.

All this will prove a boon for the environment, as will progress in solar power, which in many settings is as cheap as any relevant alternative. China is opening a new and promising fusion reactor. Despite the absence of a coherent U.S. national energy policy, the notion of a mostly green energy future no longer appears utopian.

In previous eras, advances in energy and transportation typically have brought further technological advances, by enabling humans to conquer and reshape their physical environments in new and unexpected ways. We can hope that general trend will continue.

Finally, while not quite meeting the definition of a scientific advance, the rise of remote work is a real breakthrough. Many more Zoom meetings will be held, and many business trips will never return. Many may see this as a mixed blessing, but it will improve productivity significantly. It will be easier to hire foreign workers, easier for tech or finance workers to move to Miami, and easier to live in New Jersey and commute into Manhattan only once a week. The most productive employees will be able to work from home more easily.

Without a doubt, it has been a tragic year. Alongside the sadness and failure, however, there has been quite a bit of progress. That's something worth keeping in mind, even if we can't quite bring ourselves to celebrate, as we look back on 2020.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Starting a business: 5 legal entities to choose from

FINE PRINT

By JORDAN SUNDELL
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jordan Sundell is a lawyer. His practice primarily focuses on business, real estate, estate planning, and asset protection. You can find his columns here every other Tuesday as well as on The Fine Print on Facebook. You can contact Mr. Sundell via this newspaper at editor@saipantribune.com or 235-6397/235-2440.

If you're starting a business, one of the things you'll need to decide is what kind of legal entity to use for your business. Choose the right answer and you'll pay less tax, shield your personal assets, and perhaps save money on accounting costs. Make the wrong choice and you'll pay extra tax and put your home and personal assets at risk. So, which legal entity is right for you?

The first choice is a sole proprietorship, which is an enterprise owned and operated by a single person. Under this legal structure, both the owner and the company are treated as being one and the same for tax and legal purposes.

Sole proprietorships are the default form. Every business with a single owner is automatically a sole proprietorship unless they take steps to select a different legal entity. This is true even if the business never obtained licenses and permits or registered with the appropriate authorities.

Consider an example. Say you have a day job but have a knack for snapping photos. A friend asks you to capture their wedding for a small fee, which you do without creating a name, forming a company, or getting a business license. Congratulations: You're a sole proprietor.

The downside to being a sole proprietor is liability. If the business cannot pay its debts, the owner is on the hook for them. If the business is sued, the owner is ultimately responsible. In short, the owner is personally liable for all of the business' debts—he or she has unlimited liability. And, so, if a business is sued for enough money, the owner could lose virtually all of their personal possessions—their car, their savings, and perhaps even their home.

Alarming? Maybe. But before you get too worried, ask yourself what would happen if everything went wrong with a client. Do they go to the hospital? Do they lose millions of dollars? Or do they just lose the money that they paid for your service? If a really bad day at the office includes clients getting sick, hurt, or losing heaps of cash, then unlimited liability can be a nightmare. But if you're the previously mentioned photographer who would merely need to refund some money, then the risk of unlimited liability shouldn't keep you up at night.

That brings us to legal entity No. 2: a partnership. At its simplest, it looks almost the same as a sole proprietorship, except that instead of one owner there are two or more owners. In other words, like a sole proprietorship, if a business has two or more owners but has yet to register and get licenses and permits, then the business is a partnership. Also, like a sole proprietorship, the business and each owner are treated as one and the same for tax and legal-liability purposes. Thus, a big enough lawsuit would risk almost all of the owners' collective personal assets.

Fortunately, if you want to start a business but don't want to risk all of your assets, you have three other legal entities to choose from: S corporations, C corporations, and limited liability companies. In each case, if something goes wrong, the owner will only lose what they invested, nothing more.

Of the three, S corporations are probably the least well known to the general public. But this form is popular for privately owned companies. And a key reason is tax savings. Unlike sole proprietors and partners who must pay FICA tax on all business profits, an S corporation only needs to pay FICA tax on the owner's salary. The difference can be tens of thousands of dollars more in the owner's pocket each year.

But S corporations are not for everyone. For example, corporate and foreign investors cannot own an S corporation. And there are strict rules about how profits are distributed and losses deducted. Plus, you'll need to run payroll even if there are no non-owner employees.

The next option is a C corporation, which is well suited for companies that raise significant funds from outside investors. For instance, all publicly traded companies are C corporations. And the same for most high-growth startups that fund themselves through investment rather than business revenue.

But only about 5% of companies nationwide are C corporations. That's because it has a couple significant drawbacks for the typical small- to medium-sized business. First, a corporation is taxed twice—once on the income that the company generates and then again on the dividends that it transfers to the company's shareholders. Second, corporations tend to be more complicated to set up and maintain. You will need to create corporate documents, appoint a board of directors, and follow various corporate formalities such as holding annual meetings and executing corporate resolutions.

That brings us to the last and most popular legal form: LLCs. This form is so widespread because it allows you to mix and match the best of the other legal entities. It shields an owner's personal assets from liability. It's easier to administer than S or C corporations. And you get to pick if it will be taxed like a sole proprietorship, a partnership, an S corporation or a C corporation. Plus, you can change your pick later. For example, people often elect for their LLC to be taxed as a partnership early on and then switch to S corporation status after the LLC starts making enough money to justify the extra accounting headaches.

This column is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be taken as legal advice. For your specific case, consult a lawyer.

JUSTICE

From Page 8

But enrollment at most state colleges has slumped during the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications for financial assistance have slowed. That's why congressional action expanding access to federal need-based aid for higher education was a welcome inclusion in the year-end omnibus spending bill that landed on President Donald Trump's desk this week.

Once approved, the legislation will render an estimated 1.7 million new students eligible for the maximum Pell Grant award and qualify an additional 555,000 students for some federal assistance, according to U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

It dramatically simplifies the cumbersome aid application process, slashing dozens of questions from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and making it easier for students experiencing homelessness or with a history in foster care to apply for aid.

The bill also restores Pell Grant eligibility for students who have been convicted of drug-related offenses and for those who are serving time in prison or jail. Removing these wrongly erected barriers helps individuals and communities, as people who pursue degrees while they are imprisoned are less likely to re-offend and can have a smoother reentry into society.

These are significant improvements. As Murray wrote in a statement, "Every single person in this country should be able to access and afford a quality higher education—and today we move substantially closer to that goal."

Simply put, no state in the nation can afford to squander its population's talents and abilities. Improving access to federal aid for higher education is a welcome step toward making sure every student has the chance to thrive.

© 2020 *The Seattle Times*

The greatest Christmas gift

By ROSEMARIE D. EMBILE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rosemarie D. Embile is a teacher at the Northern Marianas International School (facebook.com/NorthernMarianasInternationalSchool).

From the 4th century, when gift-giving got started as a Christmas tradition, up to today, we exchange Christmas gifts. But a Christmas present does not necessarily mean a packaged gift box. It is beyond materials things. For me, and the rest of the world, you are the greatest gift.

You are a gift when you smile. A smile is the simplest yet meaningful gift that you can give to others and yourself. When you smile, others will also see and appreciate your good mood without spending any money. Your smile is one of the best yet most valuable gifts you give to your family, friends, and even yourself. Smiling has benefits that transcend the simple act of adding brightness to your face. There are real health benefits related to producing a smile, even when you are not very happy. The act of smiling can alleviate stress, even when the person is not smiling voluntarily. A 2012 study at the University of Kansas demonstrated that individuals with chopsticks within their mouths that created an artificial smile without them realizing what happened showed a reduction in the heart rate and faster recovery from stressful situations. People who always smile are happier and better adjusted to life's challenges. Smile is also very contagious simply because everyone is a mirror when we see others do the same. Plus, smiling is something that anyone can do and benefit from in their daily lives.

You are a gift when you serve other people. Another greatest gift that you can give is to be of service to others. People are social creatures, which work well once you have a network and make connections. We do best if we have the chance to be part of something larger than ourselves. If most people see themselves and their jobs as contributing to the community's good, it would mean no work is too small, that each of us serves our unique purpose here on earth. Think of those people such as the front-liners who serve and sacrifice their lives during these unprecedented times. They have given us the greatest gift of service, and even a simple act of kindness can help us make little changes for the better.

You are a gift by simply being who you are. You are beautiful and unique and have so much to offer to the world. What you are is the greatest gift that you can give to yourself and to others. We all feel "lost" sometimes, perhaps after feeling challenged or experiencing a significant life change. Through these challenges, we often uncover actual depths of our character and find new layers of our power. The difficulties that we have are part of growing and learning, which can also serve as a guide to others. So be yourself, nothing more and nothing less.

You are a gift when you love. In the Christian faith, love is the greatest gift from our creator. According to the Bible, there are nine components of love: patience, kindness, humility, generosity, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, and sincerity. We are called to love one another. When we do things out of love, we can never go wrong. We learn from the life of Jesus that people were accepted and loved, especially those at the social pyramid's underside—poor people, outcasts, lepers, and tax collectors. Jesus is the perfect model of loving your neighbor as yourself. He is the reason of celebrating Christmas, which is the greatest gift of all.

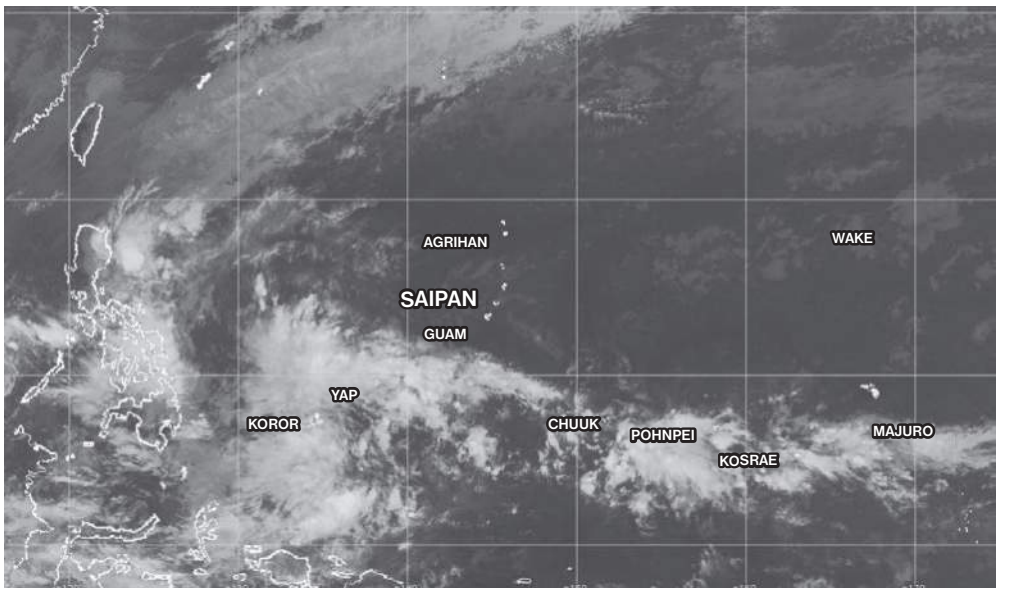
Always remember that every single thing we do makes a difference that serves as a gift to others, to ourselves and to our Creator.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.
86º / 77º	86º / 77º	86º / 77º	87º / 77º	87º / 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:18 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar show a band of clouds and showers extending eastward from the Marianas, part of another weak trade-wind disturbance pushing through the area. Scatterometer data show winds around 20-25 kt locally, with buoys and altimetry data indicating seas of 6-9 ft across the region.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86º / 79º
Palau	Thunderstorms	85º / 78º
Yap	Thunderstorms	86º / 79º
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86º / 80º
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85º / 78º
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85º / 78º
Majuro	Showers	86º / 81º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:41 AM	5:56 PM
Wednesday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Thursday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	5:39 AM	5:09 PM
Wednesday	-	6:33 AM	6:01 PM
Thursday	-	7:27 AM	6:56 PM
Friday	-	8:19 AM	7:53 PM
Saturday	-	9:09 AM	8:51 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Rain	72º / 61º
Beijing	Sunny	30º / 7º
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	63º / 52º
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	80º / 69º
London	Partly Cloudy	46º / 37º
Los Angeles	Sunny	63º / 43º
Manila	Rain	81º / 75º
Melbourne	Cloudy	79º / 64º
Miami	Thunderstorms	79º / 75º
New York	Rain	57º / 49º
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	45º / 36º
Paris	Showers	41º / 37º
Busan	Windy	37º / 21º
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55º / 39º
Salem	Thunderstorms	67º / 55º
San Francisco	Sunny	55º / 43º
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	39º / 19º
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	45º / 32º
Washington, DC	Rain	61º / 49º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:10 AM	Low Tide	-0.41
8:22 AM	High Tide	1.60
1:31 PM	Low Tide	1.04
6:20 PM	High Tide	1.62

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

BEA CABRERA
Bes House of Chicken's management and staff headed by manager Leo Legaspi.

Bes House of Chicken is ready to serve

Bes House of Chicken located along Beach Road in Garapan introduced itself to the community by having their soft opening yesterday and it promises great chicken dishes and superior service. Manager Leo Legaspi said he braved opening a restaurant, a franchise from the Philippines, during the COVID-19 pandemic just because the community needs it.

"Opening Bes House of Chicken was already in the pipeline early this year but was stalled because of the pandemic… Now that we are almost nine months into the pandemic, I decided to push through with this plan so people will have a new food or restaurant option and to brave the current circumstances because this was really my plan for this year," he said.

"There are advantages and disadvantages opening a business during the pandemic but I chose to focus on the advantages—serving the community good food at affordable prices and to also give them something new," he added.

Bes House of Chicken indeed offers a variety of chicken flavors that everyone will enjoy. "We currently serve crispy fried chicken, house blend chicken, and hot flavor. We also have four kinds of chicken wings—sweet chili, buffalo, lemon pepper, and teriyaki. One of our specialties is our whole herb roasted chicken that is not cooked using cooking oil that everyone especially health buffs will enjoy," he added.

"We have chicken meals available for everyone. Get a meal for as low as $4.50 and you get 1-piece crispy chicken with rice or it is $5 with a drink. Other meals include 2-piece crispy chicken with rice and drink for only $7, 6-piece crispy chicken for only $12, 8-piece crispy chicken for only $18, and crispy chicken and spaghetti with drink for only $5. Soon to be added to the menu is chicken inasal marinated in a mixture of tasty flavors then grilled.

BEA CABRERA
Bes House of Chicken has everything for your convenience—a drive-thru and a takeout or pick-up window located at the back of the restaurant.

Legaspi said that more items in the menu will be served in the coming days, duplicating the menu of its mother franchise in Manila. "Bes House of Chicken is a popular food chain in the Philippines and has many branches in key places. Bes House of Chicken Saipan is their first branch outside of the Philippines and the first restaurant to have drive-thru."

He added "The community's health and safety has always been in our mind when planning and building the restaurant so our service offers convenience and recognizes social distancing measures. We have a drive-thru and a pick-up and take-out area at the back of the restaurant with designated customer number for parking spaces. We plan to open our dine-in area after our grand opening that will happen in a month."

Aside from Bes House of Chicken, Legaspi also owns PC Bargain and future plans include opening a coffee shop connecting the three businesses in one location. "This pandemic doesn't mean we should stop and I urge the community not to entertain any negativity otherwise we cannot do anything at all. I feel good about the entry of the new year with people getting vaccinated and because the CNMI community is known for always working hand in hand," he said.

Bes House of Chicken is open Monday to Sunday from 6am to 9pm. For more information, call (670) 233-3777 or look them up on Facebook: Bes House of Chicken Saipan.

Calvo's Insurance donates pizza dinners to Guam's foster families

GUAM—On Dec. 23, the Calvo's Insurance team was busy in their Hagåtña office handwriting special Christmas cards that would accompany surprise gifts for Harvest House—California Pizza Kitchen (CPK) gift certificates for pizza dinners—for each of Guam's 37 foster families.

The Calvo's team enlisted the help of CPK, a Calvo's Lifestyle Club partner, to help turn the gift certificates into a memorable meal for the families. In addition to the gift certificate, CPK will provide a complimentary appetizer for each family.

"We wanted to bring Christmas cheer to families this year, and we teamed up with an incredible organization that helped us to accomplish this goal," said Paul A. Calvo, President and CEO of Calvo's Insurance Underwriters. "Harvest House provides physical, spiritual, and emotional support for Guam's foster families. We can all agree that foster parents are everyday heroes for the work that they do to nurture children in need. This is a gift that they could enjoy as a family to create positive holiday memories."

For more information about Harvest House or to make donations, visit the organization's website at harvesthouseguam.org.

Calvo's announces free Coffee Day for frontline personnel

The Calvo's Care to Share Giveaway continues this week with more prize giveaways and a free coffee day on Tues., Dec. 29 for Guam's frontline heroes. In partnership with Brewed Awakenings, Calvo's will be offering free 16 oz. cups of coffee or drinks on Dec. 29 at Brewed Awakenings to the first 100 frontline healthcare workers and first responders who sign up. The previous coffee giveaway took place from Dec. 17-19.

Calvo added, "After the year we've had, it was important to our team to celebrate the holidays in a meaningful way that could benefit others, which is how the Care to Share Giveaway began. It's our way of recognizing those in our community who take care of us all year through. We wish all frontline personnel a safe and blessed holiday season!"

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Calvo's employees finish writing their Christmas cards for Guam's foster families. The cards were attached to CPK gift cards and delivered to Harvest House for the families. From left, Calvo's Insurance employees Bertha Cabrera, Janice Lynn Reyes, Therese Toves, Agnes Matanane, and Manuel Lujan.

To receive this offer, frontline workers are asked to sign up on the Calvo's Insurance website, calvos.com/thankyou, to receive a redemption code by email. Qualified first responders and frontline healthcare workers include the following: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, private clinics and public health workers, dispatchers, firefighters, paramedics, police officers, dentists, dental hygienists, mental health workers (counselors, social workers, therapists, psychologists, etc.), hospital staff (janitors, housekeeping, and security), and active-duty military personnel.

Care to Share Holiday giveaway grand prize winner announced

On Dec. 21, Calvo's announced that Magdalena Santos was the grand prize winner of the Christmas dinner set and a $100 Pay-Less Supermarkets gift certificate. In addition to the frontline offer, Calvo's Insurance hosted weekly and grand prize Care to Share prize giveaways. For five weeks, Calvo's gave away weekly prizes of $50 Pay-Less Supermarkets gift certificates to five jolly winners each Friday. There is no purchase necessary or cost to participate through Calvo's website and social media pages. The final weekly winners will be announced on Friday, Dec. 25 on Calvo's Facebook and Instagram pages.

» Calvo's employees deliver handwritten cards and CPK gift certificates to Harvest House for 37 families

About Calvo's Insurance

Calvo's Insurance Underwriters (CIU) has served Guam & Micronesia for 82 years as the region's #1 insurance agency insuring more homes, cars, and businesses than anyone. As the market leader on Guam, Calvo's Insurance offers the full range of auto, home, health, life, property, marine cargo, casualty, bonding, and liability insurance coverage. Its credibility is bolstered by its strong partners such as American International Group (AIG) and Tokio Marine Pacific Insurance Limited. CIU leads the market by providing an affordable comprehensive insurance plan and by offering an extensive network to its customers. Calvo's Insurance is the cornerstone of Calvo Enterprises. It was the first of the Calvo companies, established in 1938 by Eduardo T. "Jake" Calvo, who began selling fire and typhoon insurance out of his home. What began as a part-time job is now the largest insurance provider on Guam. Spearheaded by Paul Calvo Jr., CIU has more than 130 employees, two offices in Guam, a branch office in Saipan, and a branch in Palau. ***(PR)***

Nation

US officials: Suspect in Nashville explosion died in blast

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The man believed to be responsible for the Christmas Day bombing that tore through downtown Nashville blew himself up in the explosion, and appears to have acted alone, federal officials said Sunday.

Investigators used DNA and other evidence to link the man, identified as Anthony Quinn Warner, to the mysterious explosion but said they have not determined a motive. Officials have received hundreds of tips and leads, but have concluded that no one other than Warner is believed to have been involved in the early morning explosion that damaged dozens of buildings and injured three people.

"Nashville is considered safe," said Metro Nashville Police Chief John Drake. "There are no known threats against this city."

In publicly identifying the suspect and his fate, officials disclosed a major breakthrough in their investigation even as they acknowledged the lingering mystery behind the explosion, which took place on a holiday morning well before downtown streets were bustling with activity and was accompanied by a recorded announcement warning anyone nearby that a bomb would soon detonate.

Then, for reasons that may never be known, the audio switched to a recording of Petula Clark's 1964 hit "Downtown" shortly before the blast.

Nashville Chief of Police John Drake speaks at a news conference Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020, in Nashville, Tenn. AP

Investigators have not uncovered a singular motive for the act nor was it revealed why Warner had selected the particular location for the bombing, which damaged an AT&T building and has continued to wreak havoc on cellphone service and police and hospital communications in several Southern states as the company worked to restore service.

Authorities said Warner, 63, was not known to law enforcement before the Christmas blast.

Warner, who public records show had experience with electronics and alarms and who had also worked as a computer consultant for a Nashville realtor, had been regarded as a person of interest in the bombing since at least Saturday when federal and local investigators converged on a home in suburban Nashville linked to him.

Federal agents could be seen looking around the property, searching the home and the backyard. A Google Maps image captured in May 2019 had shown a recreational vehicle similar to the one that exploded parked in the backyard, but it was not at the property on Saturday, according to an Associated Press reporter at the scene.

On Sunday morning, police formally named Warner as being under investigation.

Officials said their identification of Warner relied on several key pieces of evidence, including DNA found at the explosion site. Investigators had previously revealed that human remains had been found in the vicinity.

In addition, investigators from the Tennessee Highway Patrol recovered parts from the RV among the wreckage from the blast, and were able to link the vehicle identification number to an RV that was registered to Warner, officials said.

"We're still following leads, but right now there is no indication that any other persons were involved," said Douglas Korneski, special agent in charge of the FBI's Memphis field office. "We've reviewed hours of security video surrounding the recreation vehicle. We saw no other people involved."

Police were responding to a report of shots fired Friday when they encountered the RV blaring a recorded warning that a bomb would detonate in 15 minutes. Suddenly the warning stopped, and Clark's hit, "Downtown," started playing.

The RV exploded shortly afterward, sending black smoke and flames billowing from the heart of downtown Nashville's tourist scene, an area packed with honky-tonks, restaurants and shops.

Buildings shook and windows shattered streets away from the explosion near a building owned by AT&T that lies one block from the company's office tower, a landmark in downtown.

Biden hopes virus deal is glimpse of deal-making to come

WASHINGTON (AP)—For President-elect Joe Biden, Washington's year-end burst of deal-making brought renewed hope for a productive, successful first 100 days in office.

The city's fever broke, at least momentarily, as longtime combatants finally forged a COVID-19 relief deal that carried with it dozens of smaller bills, offering proof that Capitol Hill's damaged systems and norms can still produce meaningful legislation—at least when backed up against the wall.

Most of Biden's 36 years in the Senate came in an era when Washington functioned far better. As president he will be seeking to restore at least the veneer of good faith and bipartisanship that defined those times and cast aside the divisions of the tea party era and four years of President Donald Trump.

Just as lawmakers celebrated their success, Trump on Tuesday night demanded changes to the bill—boosting direct payments to individuals from $600 to $2,000—and suggested he might not sign it. The bill passed by veto-proof margins, but if Trump were to succeed in killing the bill, resuscitating the measure would likely be job No. 1 in a Biden-led Washington. In prior will-he-or-won't-he high-wire acts, Trump has signed big spending bills, but it's anybody's guess now.

In that context, the year-end deal—powered by the imperative to deliver pandemic relief to a struggling nation—is a good omen. At the end, it featured good-faith negotiation among Capitol Hill's skilled but battling leaders as well as a productive role for moderates and pragmatists in both parties whose efforts are often brushed aside.

"We have our first hint and glimpse of bipartisanship," Biden said Tuesday. "In this election, the American people made it clear they want us to reach across the aisle and work together."

The demand for bipartisanship is a common refrain that often comes as a throwaway line from Washington pols who have little experience in delivering it. But Biden has made it the centerpiece of his transition message—and he has a track record in the Senate and in the Obama administration of following through.

He also has no choice. The election delivered Democrats the narrowest House majority of the modern age and a narrowly divided Senate that demands bipartisanship, even if Democrats win control of a 50-50 chamber after next month's twin Georgia runoff elections.

Biden said there is much more work to do and spoke optimistically of lawmakers coming together again in January or February to pass another package—and the template for success is there.

There are few measures of success greater than a big, bipartisan vote. By that metric, the 5,593-page, end-of-session behemoth—combining a $900 billion COVID-19 relief deal, a $1.4 trillion catchall spending bill, and dozens of late-session add-ons — was a smash hit. The 92-6 Senate vote and a pair of lopsided House tallies on the final bill came after months of indecision and deadlock were replaced with frenzied deal-cutting and compromise.

Yet there are those in Biden's party deeply skeptical that bipartisanship can take root in such a starkly polarized country. Republicans are certain to feel the pull of their far-right flank in the coming era, shifting the party to a debt-and-deficits focus that may well be incompatible with much of Biden's agenda.

And then there's the Capitol itself. The pain-inducing process that led to the final virus package offered almost daily lessons in Congress' capacity for dysfunction and wheel-spinning. And enormous power remains concentrated in the hands of only a few leaders.

Top Republicans, like Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., who will be a critical power broker during Biden's first two years in office, credited Biden with getting Democratic leaders such as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., to accept a bill that was smaller than those she rejected in the summer and fall.

Man charged in Illinois bowling alley shooting that killed three

ROCKFORD, Ill. (AP)—A U.S. Army special forces sergeant based in Florida has been charged in an apparently random shooting at an Illinois bowling alley that left three people dead and three wounded, authorities said Sunday.

Winnebago County State's Attorney J. Hanley said Duke Webb, 37, has been charged with three counts of murder and three counts of first-degree attempted murder in the shooting at Don Carter Lanes, in Rockford, on Saturday evening. While no bowling is currently allowed due to state-imposed coronavirus restrictions, a bar linked to the business was legally open.

Webb was taken into custody shortly after the shooting at around 7 p.m., Rockford Police Chief Dan O'Shea said at a news conference Sunday morning.

"I am very confident the officers that were on the scene in the building were able to stop further violence," O'Shea said.

He said the three who died were all men, aged 73, 65 and 69, but did not provide names.

Additionally, he said, a 14-year-old boy was shot in the face and airlifted to a hospital in Madison in stable condition, and a 16-year-old girl who was shot in the shoulder was treated at a hospital and released. A 62-year-old man underwent surgery overnight after suffering multiple gunshot wounds and is in critical condition, the chief said.

The suspect has no known ties to the victims, O'Shea said.

"We believe this was a completely random act, and there is no prior meeting or any kind of relationship between the suspect and any of the victims in this case," O'Shea said. He did not provide information on what led up to the shooting.

The U.S. Army said Webb is a Special Forces Assistant Operations and Intelligence Sergeant assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne), located at Camp Bull Simons, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. He joined the Army in 2008 and was on leave Saturday.

Asia

OVER UK VARIANT

Japan halts all foreign arrivals

TOKYO (AP)—Japan is barring entry of all nonresident foreign nationals as a precaution against a new and potentially more contagious coronavirus variant that has spread across Britain.

The Foreign Ministry says the entry ban will start Monday and last through Jan. 31.

Last week, Japan banned nonresident foreigners coming from Britain and South Africa after confirming the new variant in seven people over the last two days—five from Britain who tested positive at airports and two others in Tokyo.

AP

People wearing face masks to help curb the spread of the coronavirus walk on Aoyama shopping street in Tokyo Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020.

Japan is also suspending the exemption of a 14-day quarantine for Japanese nationals and resident foreigners in a short-track program that began in November. The entrants now must carry proof of a negative test 72 hours prior to departure for Japan and self-isolate for two weeks after arrival.

U.S. military personnel stationed in Japan – who under the Status of Forces Agreement are exempt from Japanese passport control and visa requirements—would be permitted to enter the country for duty or other reasons, although they would have to follow quarantine rules.

Japan, which has been struggling with surging cases since November, has confirmed a total of 217,312 cases, including 3,213 deaths.

Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ South Korea has decided not to immediately enforce its toughest distancing rules in the greater Seoul area despite a surge in coronavirus cases there. The area is currently under the second-highest distancing rules. There have been calls for raising the restrictions to the highest level, but the government is reluctant to do so because of worries about the economy. Health Minister Kwon Deok-cheol said Sunday the government will maintain the current restrictions in the Seoul area until Jan. 3. He said the third-highest level of distancing rules imposed in other regions will also remain in place until Jan 3. Kwon said South Korea logged an average of 999 new cases per day last week, with 690 of them in the Seoul area. Under the current rules, nightclubs, karaoke rooms, fitness centers, gyms and cram schools in the Seoul area have suspended operations. As additional steps, authorities last week banned social gatherings of more than five people and ordered the shutdowns of ski resorts and other tourists spots. The toughest restrictions would shut down hundreds of thousands of more businesses and order companies to have all nonessential employees work from home. South Korea has reported 56,872 cases overall, including 808 deaths.

■ Beijing officials reported five new locally transmitted coronavirus cases as authorities rushed to mass-test residents. The five cases, linked to earlier infections, lived in the city's Shunyi district, which has since activated an emergency response plan including mass testing, source tracing and disinfection. As of Saturday noon, over 120,000 had been tested for the coronavirus. Authorities plan to test 800,000 people in the district. Separately, officials reported four locally transmitted cases in the northeastern port city of Dalia, where over 4.75 million people were tested following more than 20 confirmed cases this month. China reported 22 new cases in the last 24 hours, including 10 imported and 12 domestic. China has so far reported a total of 86,955 cases, with 4,634 deaths.

Mired in crises, N. Korea's Kim to open big party meeting

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Coronavirus restrictions that have limited his public appearances. Warning signals for his country's fragile economy, which has been battered by pandemic-related border closings and natural disasters. The impending departure of a U.S. president who said he "fell in love" with him.

As North Korean leader Kim Jong Un grapples with the toughest challenges of his nine-year rule, he's set to open a massive ruling Workers' Party congress next month to try to muster stronger public loyalty to him and lay out new economic and foreign policies.

While few question Kim's grip on power, there is still room for things to get worse, especially if the world fails to find a quick way out of the COVID-19 crisis. That would prolong North Korea's self-imposed lockdown and could possibly set conditions for an economic perfect storm that destabilizes food and exchange markets and triggers panic among the public.

The congress, the first of its kind in five years, is the party's top decision-making body. At the 2016 congress, Kim put himself in front, reaffirming his commitment to developing nuclear weapons and announcing an ambitious economic development plan. Five years later, experts say Kim doesn't have many options other than to further squeeze his populace for more patience and labor.

"When we get into the specifics, there's really nothing new the North could present at the congress in terms of developing its economy," said Hong Min, an analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification. "The country will continue to close its borders as long as the COVID-19 pandemic continues and the international sanctions will persist, so there's no visible room for a breakthrough."

Kim entered this year with a declaration of "frontal breakthrough" against punishing U.N. sanctions after his high-stakes diplomacy with President Donald Trump fell apart in 2019 over a U.S. refusal to offer extensive sanctions relief in return for limited denuclearization measures.

But Kim's drive faced an immediate setback. Later in January, North Korea was forced to seal off its international borders, including one with China—its biggest trading partner and aid benefactor—after COVID-19 emerged there.

World

Wars, instability pose vaccine challenges in poor countries

DAR MANGI, Pakistan (AP)—Arifullah Khan had just administered another polio vaccine when the gunfire blasted from the nearby hills.

"It happened so suddenly. There was so much gunfire it felt like an explosion," he said, recalling details of the attack five years ago in Pakistan's Bajaur tribal region near the Afghan border.

A bullet shattered his thigh and he fell to the ground. His childhood friend and partner in the vaccination campaign, Ruhollah, lay bleeding on the ground in front of him.

"I couldn't move," Khan said. "I watched him lying right in front of me as he took his last breath."

In Pakistan, delivering vaccines can be deadly. Militants and radical religious groups spread claims that the polio vaccine is a Western ploy to sterilize Muslim children or turn them away from religion. More than 100 health workers, vaccinators and security officials involved in polio vaccination have been killed since 2012.

The violence is an extreme example of the difficulties many poor and developing countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America face as they tackle the monumental task of vaccinating their populations against COVID-19.

It's not just the problem of affording vaccines or being at the back of the line behind wealthy countries in receiving them.

Poor infrastructure often means roads are treacherous and electricity is sporadic for the refrigerators vital to preserving vaccines. Wars and insurgencies endanger vaccinators. Corruption can siphon away funds, and vaccination campaign planners must sometimes navigate through multiple armed factions.

"The most challenging areas ... are conflict settings, where outbreaks of violence hinder vaccinations, and areas where misinformation is circulating, which discourages community participation," said UNICEF's deputy chief of global immunization, Benjamin Schreiber.

Many nations are relying on COVAX, an international system aimed at ensuring equitable access to vaccines, though it is already short on funding.

UNICEF, which runs immunization programs worldwide, is gearing up to help procure and administer COVID-19 vaccines, Schreiber told The Associated Press. It has stockpiled half a billion syringes and aims to provide 70,000 refrigerators, mostly solar powered, he said.

The agency aims to transport 850 tons of COVID-19 vaccines a month next year, double its usual annual monthly rate for other vaccines, UNICEF's executive director Henrietta Fore said in a statement.

The situation can vary widely from country to country.

Mexico is expected to start immunizations soon. The military will handle distribution, and the government has promised free vaccines for Mexico's nearly 130 million inhabitants by the end of 2021.

Meanwhile, Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest country, has yet to announce any vaccination plans. Health experts worry that widespread rumors could set back vaccinations—including claims that hospitals will give fatal injections to inflate COVID-19 death figures and receive more foreign aid.

The African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is leading a continent-wide effort to vaccinate Africa's 1.3 billion people in 54 countries. The agency is coordinating efforts to obtain doses and seeking World Bank help in funding—estimating it will take $10 billion to acquire, distribute and administer the vaccines.

The aim is to vaccinate 60% of Africa's population within two years—some 700 million people—more than the continent has done in the past, said John Nkengasong, director of the African CDC.

"The time for action is now," said Nkengasong. "The West cannot defeat COVID-19 alone. It must be defeated by all over the world, and that includes Africa."

Congo underscores the obstacles the campaign faces.

The country has overcome Ebola outbreaks with vaccination campaigns. But it struggled in eastern Congo, where Allied Democratic Forces rebels stage frequent attacks and other armed groups vie for control of mineral riches.

Rough terrain and insecurity meant vaccinators had trouble getting to all areas. Some came under attack.

Rumors flew about the Ebola vaccines, including the idea they were meant to kill people, said Dr. Maurice Kakule, an Ebola survivor who worked in vaccination campaigns. Education programs overcame much of the resistance, but similar suspicions are spreading about the COVID-19 vaccine, he said.

In Beni, the area's main city, Danny Momoti, a trader, said he would take the vaccine because of his work. "I need this COVID-19 vaccination card to be accepted in Dubai and elsewhere where I go to buy the goods for Beni," he said.

Civil wars present perhaps the greatest obstacles.

In Yemen, the health system has collapsed under six years of war between Houthi rebels who control the north and government-allied factions in the south.

Yemen saw its first outbreak of polio in 15 years this summer, centered in the northern province of Saada. Vaccinators haven't been able to work there the past two years, in part because of security fears, UNICEF said. Agencies rushed to give new inoculations in parts of the north and south in November and December.

Cholera and diphtheria have been rampant, and once again, Yemen faces a new surge in hunger. U.N. officials have warned of potential famine in 2021.

No plans for COVID-19 vaccinations have been announced yet, whether by the Houthis, southern authorities or WHO and UNICEF.

Only half of Yemen's health facilities remain functional. Roads, power networks and other infrastructure have been devastated. The Houthis have hampered some programs, trying to wrest concessions from U.N. agencies, including blocking a shipment of cholera vaccines amid a 2017 outbreak.

"Even the mildest and normally preventable diseases can prove fatal due to a lack of health care access in a conflict setting," said Wasim Bahja, the Yemen country director for International Medical Corps.

Overdrive

By CHARLES FLEMING
LOS ANGELES TIMES

TNS
2021 Ford F-150.

Ford's new F-150:

America's favorite pickup goes hybrid (in more ways than one)

The Ford F-150 pickup is the top-selling vehicle in America—not just the No. 1 truck; it's the No. 1 vehicle, period—and has been for the last 43 years running. Last year, Henry Ford's legacy company sold just under 900,000 of the things, 36% of all U.S. truck sales, leaving Chevrolet, Ram, GMC, Toyota, Honda and Nissan and all the other truck makers in its dust.

But Ford's once-comfortable lead on its competitors is narrowing. Over the last several years, Chevy sales have remained steady. Ram sales have risen. Ford's have not.

Now, in a bold move, Ford has dramatically overhauled its F-150 for 2021. Its new workhorse vehicle is a revolutionary step forward in design and technology, likely to dramatically increase F-150 sales for the next few years.

Ford executives say the redesign's inspiration came from the grass roots: Changes to the truck, from chassis to body to engine to interior, reflect consumer needs, requests and complaints.

The result is a machine that is as much work station as transportation device, a clever attempt to combine truck, mobile office and field workshop into a single unit. In that, it's almost revolutionary.

"From top to bottom, throughout the truck, with the functional and effective improvements, this is as sweeping as any truck design I've ever seen," said industry veteran Karl Brauer, analyst for the automotive search engine ISeeCars.com, who test-drove the truck the same day I did, in mid-November.

Foremost among many changes is the option of a full hybrid engine, the first ever offered in a full-size pickup truck. Available in all models, from the lowly XL (starting MSRP $28,940) to the mighty Limited (starting MSRP $70,825), each of the F-150s can be had with the new PowerBoost powerplant, a six-cylinder, twin-turbo, 3.5-liter gasoline and electric combination that produces a staggering 430 horsepower and 570 pound-feet of torque. The upgrade starts as low as $1,900.

The F-150s can all also be purchased with five other engines, from the economical 2.7-liter EcoBoost V-6 to a 5-liter V-8 and a 3-liter V-6 Turbo Diesel. They and the PowerBoost are all mated to a 10-speed automatic transmission. All models are available in four-wheel-drive configurations, too.

The driving modes that put this power to the ground are user friendly, presented with simple names like "Normal," "Slippery" or "Mud/Ruts" and accompanied by animations on the nicely configured dashboard to show exactly what those conditions look like. The Rock Crawl mode shows a truck on a slope of sharp stones; in Slippery mode, there are animated raindrops falling; and the Sport mode appears to show the truck on an actual racetrack.

The adaptive cruise control and lane centering functions are top-notch. On the freeway, the F-150 in that mode almost drives itself—slowing, braking and speeding up smoothly with no driver input.

The PowerBoost engine means better gas mileage, a reported 24 miles per gallon in the city and on the highway, but it also provides massive towing power and impressive off-road capability. (I tried hauling a powerboat up and down the Interstate 5 Grapevine a few times, and then spinning the tires and slinging sand while hill-climbing the back roads of the Grapevine-area Tejon Ranch).

But Ford has done more with the electric motor than use it simply to boost torque. Since "hybrid" means an on-board electric motor, and an on-board battery for electric storage, the new F-150 designers have used that power to transform their new truck into what the company calls the most "productive" vehicle it has ever built.

With the hybrid setup acting like a generator, it features a tailgate work area with enough plug-ins to run a Skil saw, recharge a whole workshop full of cordless power tools and even, Ford says, run an arc welder. (Ford promotional materials also indicate the power can be used to run a music system and big screen TV, so … party on.)

The tailgate area also features newly designed places to apply clamps to hold down work without wrecking the paint, along with generous in-bed lighting for working at night and an impressive number of tie-down points for securing a load. (As a motorcycle-hauling guy, I appreciate this.) There are also exterior lights that can be manipulated with dashboard buttons or a smartphone to illuminate specific work areas outside the truck.

The inside of the truck has gotten more user-friendly, as well. The front seats fold almost entirely flat. The gear selector folds flat, too, allowing the center console to extend into a broad work space for the operator's laptop, notebook, clipboard and more. There are slots where you can prop up your phone or tablet, in the center console and on the tailgate, so you can watch the YouTube video called "How to Cut Wood" while actually cutting wood.

The F-150's designers have also included a sensible storage system that makes it possible to stow and lock a fair amount of equipment under the rear seats—essential for working folks who need a place to put those power tools—while retaining enough room to include a tire jack and set of tire irons. Every F-150, admirably, also comes with a full-size spare—an increasing rarity on new vehicles.

Trucks have been becoming more like cars for years and now include as many technical and luxury appointments as equivalently priced cars. As a consequence, truck sales overall have been rising, while car sales have fallen. In April of this year, for the first time in recorded history, trucks actually outsold cars—leaving SUVs out of the equation—by a narrow margin.

But who are these truck buyers, you may ask. People who actually use the vehicles as intended, or posers who wear their trucks like some folks wear a trucker hat?

The former, mostly. More than 80% of owners use their trucks at least once a year for hauling something, and at least 50% use them for towing something, according to data complied by the research firm Strategic Vision.

"Most truck people buy a truck because there's a reason for it," said Strategic Vision president Alexander Edwards. "But they also see the truck a a part of their image, as part of who and what they're about."

Was I impressed? Yes. Am I prejudiced? Maybe a bit. Though my very first car was a 1951 Chevy panel truck, I currently have a 2007 Ford Ranger parked in my driveway. It replaced a 1997 Ford Ranger.

Ford is hedging its bet a little. A conventional truck buyer, perhaps suspicious of new technology, can still choose an F-150 with an old-fashioned diesel or V-8 engine. But Brauer said the prospective F-150 owner might not be as resistant to a hybrid truck as American buyers in general have been to hybrid and plug-in hybrid cars, which still make up a slim segment of overall sales. That truck customer will be paying close attention to the truck's power specs.

"This is a group of buyers that understands what the terms 'horsepower' and 'torque' mean," Brauer said. "And these are really impressive numbers."

By leaning further toward alternative power trains, Ford is also yielding to reality. The move away from internal combustion engines to electric motors, for all new vehicles, is no longer theoretical. Many European countries have already set dates after which no new internal combustion engine vehicles can be sold. For California, that day is coming in 2035. And Ford, after all, was the only American brand that didn't abandon California's strict fuel economy targets when the Trump administration encouraged U.S. automakers to start relaxing previously set requirements. (To be fair, GM eventually followed, and Nissan announced in early December that it would cleave to California standards.)

Besides, the electric pressure is on. California carmaker Tesla says it will bring an all-electric truck to market soon. The boutique companies Rivian and Bollinger already offer all-electric pickups. And Ford itself has already begun building and testing an all-electric F-150, which it could bring to market by mid-2022, along with a small utility van.

So maybe the hybrid F-150 will soften the market for the arrival of a fully electrified Ford pickup. But that's only if—and it's a big if—the truck delivers.

As long as Ford's first-year F-150 hybrid technology works as advertised, it may solve more problems than some buyers are even aware they have. I'm not shopping to replace my dependable old Ranger, but if I were, this pickup would be at the top of my list.

NUTS & BOLTS

2021 Ford F-150 with PowerBoost engine

- PRICE: From $28,940
- ENGINE: Six-cylinder, 3.5-liter twin-turbocharged gas/electric hybrid
- TRANSMISSION: 10-speed automatic 4-wheel drive
- HORSEPOWER: 430
- TORQUE: 520 pound-feet
- ESTIMATED FUEL ECONOMY: 24 city/24 highway/24 combined
- TOWING CAPACITY: Up to 11,000 lbs.
- PAYLOAD: Up to 11,000 lbs

Life & Style

(CLAY ENOS/WARNER BROS. VIA AP)
This image released by Warner Bros. Entertainment shows Gal Gadot in a scene from "Wonder Woman 1984." The superhero sequel earned an estimated $38.5 million in ticket sales from international theaters, Warner Bros. said Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020.

'Wonder Woman 1984' debuts with pandemic-best $16.7M

NEW YORK (AP)—Despite premiering simultaneously by streaming service, "Wonder Woman 1984" managed the best box office debut of the pandemic, opening with $16.7 million over the Christmas weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

That's only a faint glimmer of typical business during the holiday season, when cinemas are usually packed and box-office receipts are among the best of the year. Last year, "Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker" exceeded $32 million on Christmas Day alone. According to data firm Comscore, 35% of North American theaters are currently open.

But Warner Bros. nevertheless celebrated the performance of "Wonder Woman 1984," which landed in 2,150 theaters and bettered the approximately $10 million launch of Warner Bros.' "Tenet" in North America. (Universal Pictures' "The Croods: A New Age" opened similarly in late November.) "Wonder Woman 1984" grossed an additional $19.4 million in international markets where it began playing a week earlier. The Patty Jenkins-directed sequel, starring Gal Gadot, has made $85 million globally to date.

"This is a very weak theatrical opening," said David Gross, who runs the movie consultancy FranchiseRe. "With more than half of North American theaters closed and the pandemic surging, the majority of moviegoers and fans have little choice but to watch the film on television. Early foreign openings have been weak as well."

Warner Bros. has come under criticism throughout Hollywood on its plans to divert "Wonder Woman 1984" and all of its 2021 titles to HBO Max through a hybrid release plan intended to boost subscribers. "Tenet" director Christopher Nolan called the strategy "a mess." Earlier this month, AT&T chief executive John Stankey said the service has 12.6 million activated users, up from 8.6 million on Sept. 30.

In 2017, "Wonder Woman" opened with more than $100 million in ticket sales from 4,100 theaters, setting a record for biggest opening by a female filmmaker. It ultimately grossed $822 million worldwide. The sequel, made for about $200 million, had been expected to approach $1 billion in box office before the pandemic but is on course to make about $180 million, according to Gross's projections.

But WarnerMedia is counting on "Wonder Woman 1984" to matter more to HBO Max, which wobbled in its initial rollout. Reports circulated over the weekend of some users having technical difficulties streaming "Wonder Woman 1984," particularly when playing the film through Roku. HBO Max went live on Roku in mid-December after months of negotiations.

Warner Bros. nevertheless seized on the returns for "Wonder Woman 1984" as the best as could be expected, given the circumstances. The studio on Sunday announced that it would fast-track a third "Wonder Woman" film, with Jenkins and Gadot returning.

Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch sold to billionaire

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch in California has found a new owner in billionaire businessman Ron Burkle.

Burkle views the 2,700-acre property in Los Olivos, near Santa Barbara, as a land banking opportunity, his spokesman said Thursday in an email.

The Wall Street Journal reports the property was sold for $22 million to Burkle, an associate of the late pop star and co-founder of the investment firm Yucaipa Companies.

The asking price of the property was $100 million in 2016 then dropped to $67 million a year later.

In addition to a 12,500 square-foot main residence and a 3,700 square-foot pool house, the property boasts a separate building with a 50-seat movie theater and a dance studio.

Other features on the ranch are a "Disney-style" train station, a fire house and barn.

Burkle's spokesman said the billionaire had been eyeing Zaca Lake—which adjoins the property—for a new Soho House, a members-only club with locations in Los Angeles, Miami, New York and Toronto. Burkle ultimately decided the location was too remote and expensive for a club.

Burkle is the controlling shareholder of Soho House.

After Burkle saw the property from the air, he put in an offer to purchase.

Workers install 192 crystals on Times Square New Year's ball

NEW YORK (AP) — Workers installed 192 glittering Waterford crystal triangles on Times Square's New Year's Eve ball Sunday in preparation for a pandemic-limited celebration that will lack the usual tightly packed crowds of revelers.

The ball is a 12-foot geodesic sphere covered with 2,688 crystal triangles of various sizes. Some new crystals are swapped in every year. This year's addition features a new "Gift of Happiness" design represented by a sunburst of bright cuts radiating outward.

The ball blazing with 32,256 LED lights will be dropped at 11:59 p.m. on New Year's Eve to ring in 2021. Performances at the event will be designed for TV audiences watching from home.

(AP PHOTO/KATHY WILLENS)
Workers from Landmark Signs carefully carry a panel of Waterford crystal triangles to place on the Times Square New Year's Eve ball, behind them, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020, in New York, in preparation for the New Year's Eve ball drop.

Discussing sex life with ex is the final straw for wife

DEAR ABBY: I have been married for 19 years now. A few years back, I came to know about my husband's platonic relationship with his old girlfriend. She lives in a different state and is married.

My husband has long chats with her every day about everything, including our sex life. I confronted him and asked him to end their relationship because knowing that he wants me to do something in bed because his friend does it bothers me a lot. He promised at the time that he wouldn't talk or chat with her anymore, and I trusted him.

A few weeks ago, I discovered that he still chats with her every day, and he changed her name in his contact list to hide his relationship. I feel cheated on, and I want to end this marriage. Please help me. I don't want to make a wrong step.

BETRAYED IN FLORIDA

DEAR BETRAYED: A couple's sex life is supposed to be private. Your husband and his supposedly platonic "friend" have both betrayed the trust of their spouses. That he would expect you to do something in bed that he knows she is doing is substituting your body for hers, and frankly, it strikes me as another form of cheating. Obscuring her name in his contact file illustrates that he has no intention of ending their relationship.

You feel cheated on because you HAVE been cheated on. It will continue as long as you allow it. Because you're afraid you will take a wrong step, start quietly gathering all the financial information you can and talk with several lawyers before deciding which one will work hardest to protect your interests and proceed from there.

DEAR ABBY: Due to COVID shutting schools down, my employer is now allowing staff to bring their kids to work if they don't have alternative child care. I bring my 8-year-old, and I have seen many other kids around. Most of them are well behaved and don't cause any problems.

However, we have a new employee, "Michelle," who has started bringing her 4-year-old with her. The child, I'll call her Autumn, is in her mother's office, but she's so loud, she can be heard all the way across the building! I thought surely Michelle would close her office door and contain Autumn's "jolly" voice inside her own area, but she seems perfectly happy to let her daughter make as much noise as she wants.

I don't understand this. Other parents make sure their kids behave and act appropriately. What can I do to let Michelle and my supervisor know that while yes, she can bring her child with her, it's still her responsibility to make sure the kid isn't creating a distraction?

TIRED OF THE NOISE

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

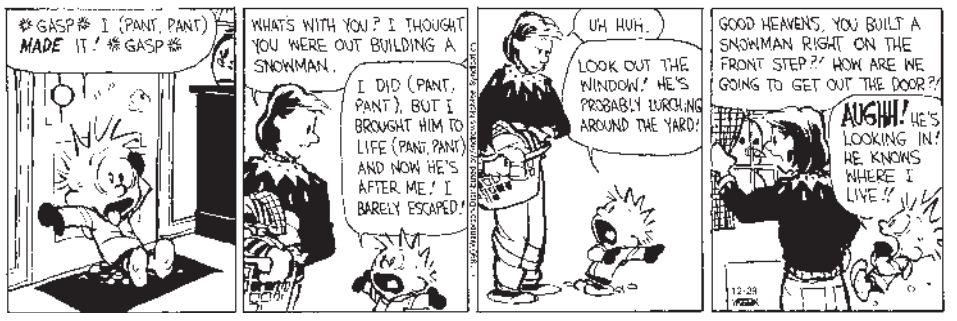
DEAR TIRED OF THE NOISE: I do not think it would be prudent to talk about this with Michelle, which is sure to make her defensive. You should, however, inform your supervisor that because Michelle's door is left open, her daughter's "jolly" voice is creating a distraction. If it has been causing a problem for you, the chances are it is doing the same for other employees and reducing productivity.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


GASP I (PANT, PANT) MADE IT! *GASP*
WHAT'S WITH YOU? I THOUGHT YOU WERE OUT BUILDING A SNOWMAN.
I DID (PANT, PANT), BUT I BROUGHT HIM TO LIFE (PANT, PANT) AND NOW HE'S AFTER ME! I BARELY ESCAPED!
UH HUH.
LOOK OUT THE WINDOW! HE'S PROBABLY LURCHING AROUND THE YARD!
GOOD HEAVENS, YOU BUILT A SNOWMAN RIGHT ON THE FRONT STEP?! HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET OUT THE DOOR?!
AUGHH! HE'S LOOKING IN! HE KNOWS WHERE I LIVE!!

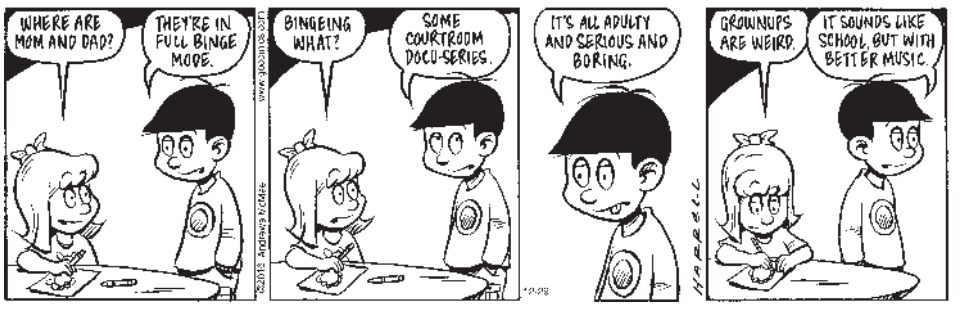
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

EVERY YEAR I GET THE SAME THING FOR CHRISTMAS... CHEESE!
EVERY...SINGLE...YEAR! IT'S ALWAYS CHEESE! CHEESE! CHEESE! CHEESE! CHEESE! CHEESE!
SO LIFE'S GOOD, HUH?
YOU BET YOUR BRIE IT IS
JIM DAVIS 12-29

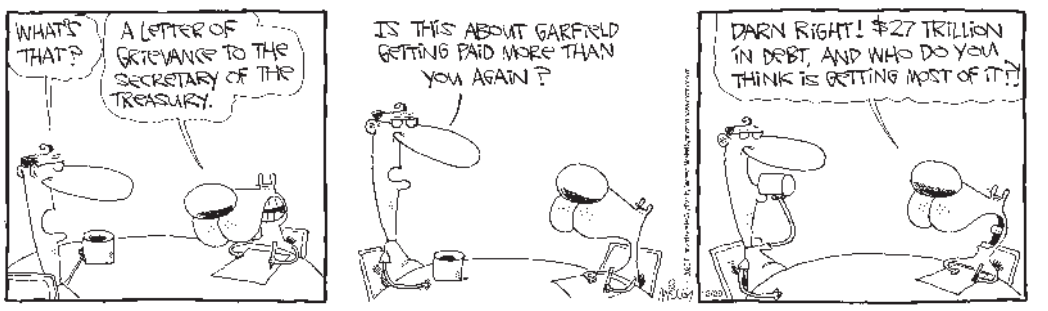
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHERE ARE MOM AND DAD?
THEY'RE IN FULL BINGE MODE.
BINGEING WHAT?
SOME COURTROOM DOCU-SERIES.
IT'S ALL ADULTY AND SERIOUS AND BORING.
GROWNUPS ARE WEIRD.
IT SOUNDS LIKE SCHOOL, BUT WITH BETTER MUSIC.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WHAT'S THAT?
A LETTER OF GRIEVANCE TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.
IS THIS ABOUT GARFIELD GETTING PAID MORE THAN YOU AGAIN?
DARN RIGHT! $27 TRILLION IN DEBT, AND WHO DO YOU THINK IS GETTING MOST OF IT?!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Uppity one
5 Snooze
8 Loony
12 Actress Turner
13 Flamenco cheer
14 Leer at
15 Praiseful pieces
16 Summer headwear
18 Italian astronomer
20 Keaton of "Morning Glory"
21 Scoundrel
22 Feedbag bit
23 Monster
26 Exorbitant
30 Dadaist Jean
31 "— a Rebel"
32 2016 Olympics city
33 Didn't go out
36 World-weary
38 W. Hemisphere gp.
39 Picnic dessert
40 Representative
43 Rocket stage
47 "Ditto"
49 Actress Ward
50 Legendary boxing family
51 Tool set
52 Lena of "Chocolat"
53 Section
54 Type squares
55 Hatchling's home

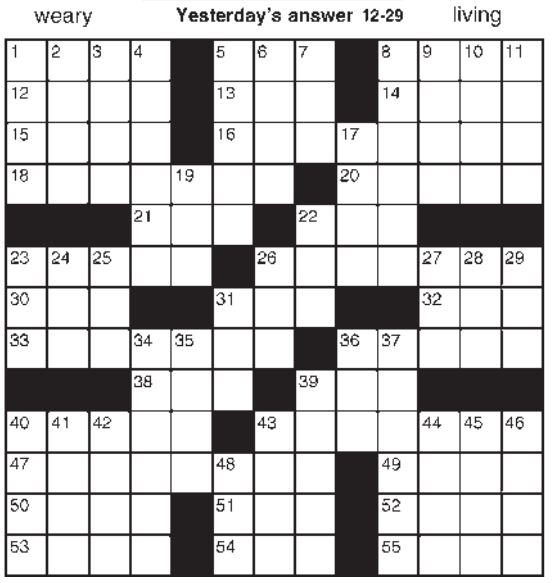
DOWN

1 Trudge
2 Zilch
3 Scott Turow book
4 Rudiments
5 Snooped (around)
6 Saxophone range
7 Apiece
8 Benefit by
9 Turkish title
10 Spanish custard
11 Head, to Henri
17 An apple —
19 Back muscle, briefly
22 Approves
23 Some coll. degrees
24 Epoch
25 Suitable
26 Observe
27 A Gershwin brother
28 USO patrons
29 Garden tool
31 "— Pinafore"
34 Truthful
35 Vow
36 Life story
37 Textbook chapter
39 Well-versed folks?
40 Now, on a memo
41 Big bash
42 Mideast ruler
43 Edge
44 Far (Pref.)
45 Yale students
46 Harangue
48 — out a living

Solution time: 22 mins.

S	L	A	G	■	S	S	E	■	S	T	A	G
P	U	L	E	■	I	A	D	■	A	E	R	O
A	L	O	I	■	H	O	A	D	C	H	E	W
M	U	J	M	U	L	■	M	A	H	I	A	N
■	■	■	A	S	I	A	■	B	U	Y	■	■
R	O	A	D	S	T	E	R	■	M	A	R	T
A	I	L	■	R	E	S	O	D	■	K	I	A
E	L	L	A	■	R	O	A	D	S	I	G	N
■	■	■	S	N	O	■	P	S	A	T	■	■
E	S	T	O	P	S	■	T	Y	P	I	N	G
R	O	A	D	T	R	I	P	■	A	T	O	M
L	A	T	E	■	A	R	I	■	U	R	G	E
E	K	E	S	■	S	A	G	■	L	Y	O	N

Yesterday's answer 12-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jude Law, 48; Patricia Clarkson, 61; Ted Danson, 73; Jon Voight, 82.

Happy Birthday: Pick up the pace, target what you want to achieve and put your heart and soul into reaching your goal. Strive for perfection, and be creative and compassionate. You will gain incredible support that will help tip the scale in your favor this year. Don't settle for less when you can have so much more. Strive to make your voice heard. Your numbers are 8, 13, 24, 26, 32, 39, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Emotions will surface if you are too open regarding your opinions. Be a good listener, and you will avoid a confrontation that can cost you. Look at change as a path to a better future. A contract or partnership looks promising. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Reaching out to a friend, relative or peer may be helpful in some way, but it may also lead to uncertainty regarding what to do next. Follow the path based on knowledge and facts; it will lead to a change that will enforce new beginnings. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Gather information, leave nothing to chance and proceed with optimism and discipline. Don't neglect someone you love. Nurturing relationships will help control discord. Financial improvement will require a strict budget. Prohibit emotional spending or trying to impress someone with a lavish gift. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Initiate plans with someone you love. Find unique ways to socialize without jeopardizing anyone's health. Refuse to let an outsider bring you down or interfere with your plans. You are perfect just the way you are. 3 stars

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Consider what and who can benefit you the most. A change someone makes will not be in your best interest. Look inward and find ways to grow personally, spiritually and emotionally. Make health, fitness and a proper diet your priorities. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Valuable information will come your way if you reach out to experts. Once you have done all the preliminary work to ensure success, a change will unfold. Refuse to let anyone meddle in your personal life. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Be observant; someone's actions may not be as favorable as you are led to believe. Concentrate on personal gains, physical fitness and mastering the skills required to pursue your goal. Romance is on the rise, but the truth may be an issue. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Refuse to let uncertainty take over. Trust in your intuition and ability to get things done. Don't feel you have to initiate a change because someone wants you to make a move. Handle your money carefully to avoid loss. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Just keep moving. Don't let anyone intervene or push you in a direction you don't want to go. Keep busy doing what will bring you the highest return. Personal improvement will boost your confidence. Follow your heart, and pursue your passion. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Concentrate on what you can accomplish, not the impossible. Knowing where you will be most effective will help you avoid setbacks. Don't expect everyone to agree with you, but be smart and offer incentives to offset negativity. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Question everything. Gather facts. Stay on track. Refuse to let someone step in and take over when you know what you want and how to go about getting your way. Don't back down when you should push forward. Choose fitness instead of indulgence. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Be smart regarding your health, fitness and emotional well-being. Don't expect everyone to be upfront or honest with you. Verify what you hear before you share information with others. Home and professional improvements will benefit you mentally and emotionally. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are passionate, aggressive and secretive. You are intelligent and engaging.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

8						6
			7	3		
7	1		5		4		9	2
		4				1	2	
	8						5	
	2	1				8		
1	3		4		2		8	5
				6	5			
5								9

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

6	7	1	4	9	5	2	3	8
3	5	9	2	6	8	7	1	4
4	8	2	3	7	1	6	5	9
9	6	8	5	4	3	1	2	7
5	1	3	7	8	2	4	9	6
7	2	4	9	1	6	5	8	3
1	4	5	6	3	9	8	7	2
8	3	7	1	2	4	9	6	5
2	9	6	8	5	7	3	4	1

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

RIDDLES **Solution: 12 letters**

P	Y	E	N	I	G	M	A	C	R	O	S	T	I	C
A	R	Q	L	E	V	A	R	G	J	I	G	S	A	W
T	O	E	U	C	C	R	B	R	B	O	G	G	L	E
C	G	C	D	I	H	G	T	R	O	S	K	A	V	I
H	E	R	G	I	Z	A	N	W	C	Z	D	E	T	P
W	L	O	S	Y	C	N	L	E	I	I	I	I	S	E
O	L	S	O	U	R	A	B	L	U	S	P	H	K	P
R	A	S	L	Y	N	E	M	A	E	K	T	H	W	P
K	E	W	V	E	F	R	T	E	F	N	O	E	E	E
O	D	O	E	U	G	I	A	S	N	F	G	D	R	R
A	O	R	D	U	G	S	T	V	Y	T	L	E	U	E
N	C	D	E	A	A	U	S	S	E	M	E	E	G	S
S	L	S	J	U	M	B	L	E	Y	L	R	S	I	A
E	S	O	P	P	E	E	X	O	M	M	U	L	F	E
N	O	I	T	C	A	R	T	S	I	D	O	U	B	T

© 2020 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 12/29

Acrostic, Allegory, Anagram, Baffle, Befuddle, Boggle, Challenge, Cipher, Code, Crosswords, Distraction, Doubt, Enigma, Figure, Flummox, Game, Gravel, Guess, Jigsaw, Jokes, Jumble, Kids, Koan, Logic, Mystery, Mystify, Patchwork, Pepper, Pose, Predicament, Quiz, Rebus, Screen, Sieve, Solve, Sort, Stump, Sudoku, Teaser, Twister, Unravel, Whiz

Yesterday's Answer: Recognized

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 47 through 61** order on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Mavs set NBA record in rout of Clippers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Luka Doncic scored 24 points and the Dallas Mavericks led by a NBA-record 50 points at halftime in a 124-73 rout of the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday to earn their first win of the season.

Josh Richardson added 21 points and Tim Hardaway Jr. had 18 points for the Mavs, who kept up their dominance in the second half, too.

"There's no huge secret," Richardson said. "We just got up and played well. We played with a sense of urgency."

The Clippers trailed 77-27 at halftime, with their 50-point deficit being the largest at the break in the shot-clock era, which began in 1954-55.

Paul George led the Kawhi Leonard-less Clippers with 15 points before sitting out the second half. Serge Ibaka added 13 points and nine rebounds over three quarters of the team's first loss. The Clippers began with victories over the defending NBA champion Lakers and Denver.

"It's not that big of a deal," George said. "Yes, we got our butts kicked today, but it's one game."

Los Angeles got outrebounded 32-16, had just three assists, and missed 18 of 19 3-pointers in the first half. George was the only Clipper in double figures with 13 after missing all six of his 3-point attempts.

"It was a tough game, coming from Christmas. I enjoyed my Christmas Day yesterday, today just popped up on me a little too fast," George said. "I take full responsibility. It'll be a different situation next game. We will be ready."

Doncic had 18 points, seven rebounds and four assists in the first half. He scored as many points (13) as the Clippers in the first quarter. The Mavs scored nearly every time down the court while forcing the Clippers into 9 of 37 field-goal shooting.

"Everything was clicking on all cylinders," said Hardaway Jr., adding that the team didn't realize how big the lead was until they were in the locker room at halftime.

Dallas coach Rick Carlisle emphasized staying consistent in the second half.

AP

Dallas Mavericks' Luka Doncic, left, shoots over Los Angeles Clippers' Paul George during the first half of an NBA game in Los Angeles, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020.

Hornets 106, Nets 104

Gordon Hayward had 28 points, seven assists and six rebounds, and the Charlotte Hornets handed the Brooklyn Nets their first loss of the season.

Terry Rozier added 19 points, including two clutch free throws, and P.J. Washington finished with 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Hornets, who limited the Nets to 42.7% shooting from the floor.

Kevin Durant led the Nets with 29 points, and Kyrie Irving chipped in with 25 points.

Hayward, acquired in a sign-and-trade this offseason with Boston, contributed in all phases— making 12 of 20 shots, setting up his teammates for good scoring opportunities with his playmaking ability and helping the Hornets escape from some potentially bad possessions.

Pelicans 98, Spurs 95

Brandon Ingram had 28 points and 11 rebounds and New Orleans held on for a home victory over San Antonio.

The Spurs had a chance to tie it after Steven Adams, whose put-back dunk put New Orleans up 97-91 with two minutes left, missed a pair of free throws with 11 seconds to go.

But Eric Bledsoe blocked DeMar DeRozan's 3-point attempt from behind in the final seconds to preserve the victory for New Orleans.

Zion Williamson had 18 points and 11 rebounds for the Pelicans, scoring about half of his points on dunks. Lonzo Ball had 16 points and five steals, and Josh Hart had 12 points and 11 rebounds off the bench.

Magic 120, Wizards 113

Markelle Fultz and Terrence Ross each scored 26 points as Orlando mounted a big fourth quarter comeback and won in Washington to start a season 3-0 for the first time since 2009-10.

Nikola Vučević scored in the post to give Orlando a 114-113 lead with 25.1 seconds as the Magic scored the final 10 points of the game in defeating the Wizards for the sixth straight game.

Vučević finished with 15 points and eight rebounds while Evan Fournier added 19.

Knicks 130, Bucks 110

Tom Thibodeau's first victory as Knicks coach came surprisingly easy against a top opponent, as New York routed Milwaukee.

Julius Randle had 29 points, 14 rebounds and seven assists, Elfrid Payton scored 27 points in his best game as a Knick, and New York led by as much as 28 against the team that had the best record in the NBA the previous two seasons.

The Knicks were among the NBA's worst during that time but are hoping for a turnaround under Thibodeau, the former Coach of the Year who engineered comebacks in Chicago and Minnesota.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points and 13 rebounds for the Bucks.

Cavaliers 118, 76ers 94

Andre Drummond scored 24 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and made three steals as Cleveland won its third straight game to start the season, beating Philadelphia in Cleveland.

Collin Sexton added 22 points and Darius Garland had 14 points and seven assists for Cleveland, which finished with the second-worst record in the NBA last season at 19-46. The Cavaliers are 3-0 for the first time since winning six in a row to begin 2016-2017.

Tobias Harris had 16 points, nine rebounds and five assists for Philadelphia, which fell to 2-1 and played without center Joel Embiid (back tightness). Ben Simmons scored 15 points and Dwight Howard had nine points and four fouls filling in for Embiid.

Warriors 129, Bulls 128

Damion Lee hit a 3-pointer with 1.7 seconds remaining and Stephen Curry scored 36 points, sending Golden State to a victory in Chicago for its first win of the season.

With the Chicago defense focused on the sharp-shooting Curry, Lee took a handoff after Golden State inbounded the ball with 5 seconds left and fired from a few feet beyond the top of the 3-point arc.

Pacers 108, Celtics 107

Domantas Sabonis scored on a layup with 8.4 seconds left and had 19 points and 10 rebounds for his 100th double-double, helping Indiana beat Boston.

Malcolm Brogdon scored a season-high 25 points as Indiana improved to 3-0 for the first time since the 2013-14 season.

Jayson Tatum led Boston with 25 points, but missed a 3-pointer with 1.8 seconds to go as the Celtics lost their second straight.

Padres reportedly acquire Snell from Rays

CALIFORNIA—The San Diego Padres have acquired Blake Snell from the Tampa Bay Rays in a blockbuster trade that brings four highly touted prospects back to Tampa, per reports. The Athletic's Dennis Lin first reported the details, and says the deal is pending physicals.

Snell was last seen dominating the Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 6 of the World Series before being pulled by Rays skipper Kevin Cash in one of the most controversial managerial decisions in recent memory.

He posted a 3.24 ERA across 50 innings in 11 starts in 2020. The 28-year-old lefty was even better in the postseason, pitching to a 3.03 ERA in another 29 2/3 innings as the Rays won their second AL pennant before bowing out to the Dodgers following Snell's early exit in Game 6.

The 2018 AL Cy Young winner now joins a star-studded Padres team taking aim at title contention under GM A.J. Preller.

Snell, who signed an extension prior to the 2019 season, has three years remaining on an eminently affordable deal. He's the second big-ticket starting pitcher Preller has traded for this year, after Mike Clevinger came over at the trade deadline only to fall injured. He required Tommy John surgery and will miss the 2021 season.

Snell will join breakout star Dinelson Lamet, who finished fourth in NL Cy Young voting in 2020, atop the San Diego rotation. The lineup is anchored by budding superstar Fernando Tatis Jr. and Manny Machado.

The Padres made the postseason for the first time since 2006, racing back to win the NL wild-card series against the St. Louis Cardinals in dramatic fashion. Injuries decimated their pitching staff and eventually left them overmatched against the Dodgers in the NLDS.

Now they will try their hand over a full season with even more proven arms, and are set up nicely for a window of contention.

The Rays continue their near-constant shuffling of pieces. In return for shipping their latest bright, established star out to San Diego, the Rays are getting four promising young players, headlined by potential rotation replacement Luis Patiño.

Coming off their World Series appearance, the Rays are now without two of their three dominant starters, having traded Snell and declined veteran Charlie Morton's option, leaving him to sign with the Atlanta Braves.

The 21-year-old Patiño, however, got his first taste of the big leagues in 2020 and could contribute to Tampa's pitching staff right away. Cole Wilcox, a 6-foot-5 righty who was just drafted in June, is further away from the majors but was already rated highly in the Padres' stacked farm system.

Also going back to the Rays are two young catchers, Francisco Mejia and Blake Hunt. It's the second blockbuster for Mejia, a one-time top prospect who is still only 25. ***(NBC)***

Federer withdraws from Australian Open

SWITZERLAND (AP)—Roger Federer withdrew from the Australian Open while he continues preparing to return to action after two operations on his right knee and a tour absence that will have lasted longer than a year, his agent told The Associated Press.

Tony Godsick—Federer's long-time representative and CEO of their management company, TEAM8 —said Sunday he is working on putting together a 2021 tennis calendar for the 20-time Grand Slam champion, who plans to get back to competition soon after the year's first major tennis tournament.

This ends Federer's streak of 21 consecutive appearances at Melbourne Park, a run that began with his 2000 debut there and includes six championships.

"Roger has decided not to play the 2021 Australian Open. He has made strong progress in the last couple of months with his knee and his fitness. However, after consultation with his team, he decided that the best decision for him in the long run is to return to competitive tennis after the Australian Open," Godsick said in a statement sent to the AP.

"I will start discussions this coming week for tournaments that begin in late February and then start to build a schedule for the rest of the year," Godsick said.

The start of the Australian Open's main draw was delayed by three weeks because of the coronavirus pandemic and is now scheduled to begin on Feb. 8. In other news related to the tournament, Tennis Australia announced that five-time runner-up Andy Murray was given a wild-card entry.

Murray, a three-time major champion and former No. 1, is 122nd in the rankings after going through two hip operations and considering retirement.

AP

In this Jan. 30, 2020 file photo, Switzerland's Roger Federer attempts to make a backhand return to Serbia's Novak Djokovic during their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia.

The 39-year-old Federer, who has spent more weeks atop the ATP rankings than anyone else but is No. 5 after his hiatus, is currently training in his usual offseason home of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The choice to delay his comeback came with input from coaches Severin Luthi and Ivan Ljubicic and fitness coach Pierre Paganini.

"We wish him all the best as he prepares for his comeback later in the year," Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley said in a tweet confirming that Federer pulled out of the field, "and look forward to seeing him in Melbourne in 2022."

Federer hasn't played a tournament match since late January at the 2020 Australian Open, where he was clearly injured while losing in straight sets to eventual champion Novak Djokovic in the semifinals. Soon after, Federer participated in an exhibition charity event with Rafael Nadal in front of a record tennis crowd of more than 50,000 people at a soccer stadium in Cape Town, South Africa.

Just weeks later, Federer announced he had arthroscopic surgery on his right knee and would be sidelined for at least four months. He later had a second procedure on that knee and wound up missing the rest of the pandemic-altered season.

One measure of Federer's popularity: Despite appearing in only six matches in 2020, he recently was voted the winner of the ATP Tour fans' favorite award for the 18th consecutive time.

Until this knee issue, Federer only had his career interrupted once by an operation — on his left knee in 2016. He sat out the second half of that season, including the Rio de Janeiro Olympics and the U.S. Open, but was back at his best when he resumed playing, winning the Australian Open and Wimbledon in 2017.

He won the Australian Open again the following year for No. 20 in his Grand Slam collection, which includes eight trophies from Wimbledon, five from the U.S. Open and one from the French Open.

While Federer was sidelined this year, Nadal equaled his men's record for most major championships by collecting his 20th at Roland Garros in October. Federer posted a congratulatory message on social media to Nadal that day, saying he hopes "20 is just another step on the continuing journey for both of us."

Djokovic's title in Australia this year moved him closer to the other members of the Big Three of men's tennis with a total of 17.

Murray gets wild-card entry

Five-time Australian Open runner-up Andy Murray has been given a wild-card entry into the first Grand Slam tournament of next year.

Former top-ranked Murray has slipped to No. 122 in the ATP rankings after several years of battling hip injuries and surgery.

Murray made a teary retirement announcement in Melbourne two years ago before undergoing a second round of surgeries to extend his career.

Osaka is AP Female Athlete of Year

NEW YORK (AP)—With tennis, like so much of the world, shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic, Naomi Osaka found herself with time to read and think.

And while she won the U.S. Open for her third Grand Slam title, she also stood out for speaking out about racial injustice and police brutality.

As noteworthy in 2020 for her activism away from the tennis court as her success on it, Osaka was selected by The Associated Press as the Female Athlete of the Year in results revealed Sunday after a vote by AP member sports editors and AP beat writers.

"It was difficult to be isolated from my family for large parts of the year, but that's nothing compared to others. It was sad to watch and read the news of people suffering from COVID-19, and the economic and social effect on so many—losing jobs, mental health. It was such a tough year for so many people," Osaka wrote in an email interview. "And then watching the police injustices like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Jacob Blake (to name just a few) in the summer broke my heart. I am proud of my U.S. Open victory, but more so that I got people talking about the real issues."

Osaka collected 18 of 35 first-place votes and a total of 71 points.

WNBA Finals MVP Breanna Stewart was next with nine first-place votes and 60 points, followed by Sarah Fuller, the Vanderbilt soccer player who kicked for the school's football team, with one first-place vote and 24 points.

LeBron James was announced Saturday as the AP Male Athlete of the Year.

Billie Jean King, a 12-time Grand Slam singles title winner and a pioneering advocate for decades, praised Osaka for positioning "herself as a leader not only in women's tennis but in all of sports and a force for change in our society."

"She successfully completed the difficult task of taking excellence in sports performance and using that platform to succeed outside of sports on a much bigger stage," King told the AP. "She ignited a conversation on social justice, the results of which were bigger than tennis, larger than sports, and in doing so raised the bar for all those who want to leverage the gifts and talents we have to make a difference in our world."

Osaka went 16-3 during the coronavirus-truncated tennis calendar—the professional tours took about a five-month hiatus; Wimbledon was canceled for the first time since 1945—and ended the year ranked No. 3.

The defining stretch of Osaka's season came in August and September, when she compiled an 11-match winning streak that included the U.S. Open.

It was during a tuneup tournament in New York that Osaka—whose father is Haitian and mother is Japanese—declared she would not play her semifinal, joining athletes from the NBA and elsewhere in protesting the police shooting of Blake.

"There are clearly so many worthy issues. This one especially resonated with me because of my own personal upbringing; and also while the tennis tour was paused, I was able to watch and read news at length for the first time in my life. This summer in the U.S., tensions were high and reached boiling point," Osaka said. "It was the right time for me to speak up.

Taking her lead, that tournament shut down completely for a day.

"Her activism has shone a light on how we as individuals and sports leagues can collectively make an impact," WTA Chairman and CEO Steve Simon said. "Not only is she a phenomenal tennis player, but she also demonstrates how athletes have an opportunity to use their platform for something bigger than the game or themselves. Her actions are nothing short of inspiring and she is so very deserving of this recognition."

During the U.S. Open, Osaka brought attention to Black victims of violence by arriving for matches wearing face masks bearing the names of Floyd, Taylor, Tamir Rice, Elijah McClain, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery and Philando Castile.

"To be honest, I really didn't stop to think about what others would think of my actions. Other people's opinions weren't going to stop me from doing what I know in my heart was the right thing to do," Osaka said. "The strong voices of Colin (Kaepernick) and LeBron were certainly positive influences for me and gave me strength in my own convictions."

Chiefs get top seed; Steelers, Seahawks bag titles

MISSOURI (AP)—Kansas City clinched the top seed in the AFC and the only playoff bye when Patrick Mahomes threw a 25-yard touchdown pass to Demarcus Robinson with just under two minutes for a win over Atlanta on Sunday, 17-14.

The Chiefs had to watch as Pro Bowl kicker Younghoe Koo missed a tying field-goal attempt with 9 seconds left to escape.

The Chiefs (14-1) won their NFL-record seventh straight one-possession game and matched a franchise record with their 10th straight win. They took any seeding drama out of games involving Pittsburgh and Buffalo and will have that coveted first-round AFC bye when the postseason begins in two weeks.

Steelers 28, Colts 24

Ben Roethlisberger overcame a month-long malaise to throw for 342 yards and three second-half touchdowns as the Steelers locked up the division title.

Listless and lifeless for weeks thanks to a three-game losing streak that followed an 11-0 start, Pittsburgh (12-3) somehow got it together over the final 25 minutes against the Colts (10-5). Indianapolis missed a chance to inch closer to a playoff berth when it let a 17-point third-quarter lead slip away.

Seahawks 20, Rams 9

The Seahawks claimed the NFC West title, Russell Wilson throwing a 13-yard TD pass to Jacob Hollister with 2:51 left for the clinching score.

Seattle (11-4) earned its first division title since 2016 and its fifth since Pete Carroll arrived in 2010 behind a stellar defensive effort and a clutch late drive engineered by Wilson.

Seattle's quarterback scored on a 4-yard run on the opening drive of the second half for a 13-6 lead. But the final drive was Wilson at his best: Wilson was 5 for 5 for 59 yards on the drive, hitting four different receivers.

AP

Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Diontae Johnson (18) makes a catch past Indianapolis Colts cornerback Rock Ya-Sin (26) for a touchdown during the second half of an NFL game, Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020, in Pittsburgh.

Panthers 20, Washington 13

Dwayne Haskins turned the ball over three times before getting benched, Steven Sims muffed a punt return that turned into a Panthers touchdown and Washington blew its first chance to clinch the NFC East.

Haskins was 14 of 28 with a fumble and two interceptions after starting in place of injured veteran Alex Smith, despite violating COVID-19 protocols last week. After being stripped of his captaincy and fined $40,000 for partying without a mask, he was stripped of the ball by Marquis Haynes in the first quarter and picked off by Tahir Whitehead and Tre Boston in the second.

Cowboys 37, Eagles 17

Andy Dalton threw for 377 yards and three touchdowns, two to Michael Gallup, and the Cowboys stayed alive in the NFC East playoff race.

The Cowboys (6-9) won their third consecutive game and still have a chance to win the division thanks to Washington's 20-13 loss to Carolina, which guaranteed that the NFL's worst division won't have a team with a winning record.

Dallas can overtake Washington (6-9) with a win at the New York Giants and a Washington loss to the Eagles on the final weekend of the regular season. The Giants (5-10) can get in by beating the Cowboys if Washington loses.

Ravens 27, Giants 13

Lamar Jackson directed four scoring drives during the decisive first half. Baltimore's fourth straight victory, combined with Pittsburgh's win over Indianapolis, lifted the Ravens past the Colts in the AFC wild-card hunt. With a victory in Cincinnati next week, the Ravens (10-5) will earn a playoff berth for the third year in a row.

ROLLERS

From Page 20

Airson Atan, who scored 15 points in their semis win over the Titans, made only two free throws in the first half. Craig Padayao also struggled as after delivering 12 markers in their semis victory, he was scoreless in the first half of the finals.

In the second half, the Ol'Aces gunners still could not find their target, while Toves knocked in a couple of jumpers to keep Rollers Blue's safe distance and Factor scored the champion team's last 3 points to seal the victory.

Factor's field goal and a split charity came when the Ol'Aces cut the deficit to 10, 24-34, after Padayao nailed only his second basket in the finals. The Ol'Aces then had several chances to bring down Rollers Blue's lead to single digit, but could not cash in on those opportunities. The last ones were when Atan drove strong to the basket and eluded a couple of defenders, but his layup fell short. Lucio Aldan went for the put-back, but overshot his mark.

Toves collared the rebound and quickly gave the ball to Leo Naraja, who sprinted to the their frontcourt, drew the defense of Padayao on his way to the basket before making a no-look back pass to Factor, who then banked in the point-blank shot for Rollers Blue's 36-26 lead, down to the last two minutes and change in the finals.

Another Ol'Aces missed opportunity returned possession to Rollers Blue and Factor later trooped to the 15-foot line after going for the basket and getting a foul from Aldan. Factor muffed his first free shot, but knocked in the second one to give Rollers Blue a baker's dozen lead, 37-24, with a little over a minute left in the match.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Ol'Aces' C.J. Santos, left, and Rollers Blue's Charlie McDonald, center, jockey for position in the rebound play during the second half of their title match in the U17 division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

The scores remained, as the Ol'Aces continued to fire blanks in the closing minutes of the game, while Rollers Blue wisely ran down the clock and celebrated when the final buzzer sounded.

Rollers Blue and the Ol'Aces were awarded the championship and runner-up trophies in a brief ceremony, while organizers also handed out individual trophies. Toves took the Finals MVP award after scoring 13 points in the title game, while Padayao bagged the season MVP. Toves got two more awards, as he also topped the blocks (eight) and rebounds (22) departments, while Naraja won in the assist category (eight) and Aldan prevailed in steals (14).

With Rollers Blue taking the U17 title last night and Rollers Red winning the U13 crown, only two more division championships will be contested—the boys U19 and women's. The winners of the two remaining divisions will be decided this Saturday.

Meanwhile, Rollers Basketball Club would like to thank Pacific Amusement, QQ Rent A Car, and MARPAC for supporting the competition and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force for giving them clearance to hold the tournament.

Rollers Blue 37—Toves 13, Palmes 9, Naraja 7, Factor 7, Diaz 7, Li 1.

Ol'Aces 24— Aldan 7, Atan 5, Padayao 4, Ermitanio 3, David 3, Kaipat 2.

Scoring by halves: 24-10, 37-24.

OVER

From Page 20

brey's sister, Audrey (1:11:00), Allyssya Angeles (1:11:56), and Liz Phan (1:14:20).

In the men's 10K competitive category, off-island runner Reinier Paauwe timed in at 36:17 to take the top podium. Joining him in the Top 5 were Saipan's Shuji Kuroda (38:43), former NMI player and now New York-based Rintaro Miyawaki (39:41), Saipan's Edward Dela Cruz Jr. (43:53) and CNMI Men's National Team head coach and NMIFA technical director Michiteru Mita (45:14).

In the 10K non-competitive, Joseph Yap (58:57) was the top finisher, while Aaron Pamintuan (1:04:19) and Jared Pangelinan (1:43:00) were second and third, respectively.

Participants and organizers of the JP Hero Run on Tinian pose for a group photo after the event.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In other results, JNA player Julie Chavez was the top female finisher in the 5K competitive race after logging 32:51, while off-island participant Kieran Paauwe (Canada) ruled the men's division with his 24:14.

In the 5K non-competitive, Kailyn Paauwe had the best time (35:57) in the women's division, while Kieran Paauwe posted the fastest mark (24:14) in the men's.

Meanwhile, proceeds from the JP Hero Run will be donated to the Marianas March Against Cancer and the Commonwealth Cancer Association.

Mavs set NBA record in rout of Clippers

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Federer withdraws from Australian Open

PAGE 18

Rollers Blue wins U17 finale

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Rollers Blue ruled the U17 division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament after dominating the Ol'Aces, 37-24, in their title match yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Rollers Blue took control of Game 1 of the finals showdown right at the get-go en route to building a 14-point halftime lead and then protected its double-digit advantage in the second half to close out the title duel early. Rollers Blue held a twice-to-beat advantage in the finals after having an unbeaten record in the preliminary round and avoided going into the rubber this weekend by finishing off the Ol'Aces, who reached the championship round after eliminating the Chinatown Titans last Sunday, 50-42.

Merrick Toves, Jeremiah Diaz, Jay Art Palmes, Leo Naraja, and T.J. Factor knocked in at least two field goals apiece for Rollers Blue in the first half and combined for all, but one of the team's baskets in the opening frame for their 24-10 lead at the break.

The Ol'Aces failed to keep up with Rollers Blue on offense in the first 20 minutes of the finals, as the former were held to three field goals.

See ROLLERS on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Rollers Blue players and coaches pose for a photo after beating the Ol'Aces in the finals, 37-24.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Rollers Blue's Jeremiah Diaz, front, tries to recover a loose ball down the baseline, while the Ol'Aces' Lucio Aldan defends during the second half of their title match in the U17 division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Over 600 join JP Hero Run

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

More than 600 participated in the 2020 JP Hero Run Virtual Edition as they completed the 5K and 10K events last week.

On and off-island runners, students, members of non-government organizations, private companies, family members, government employees, and sports associations joined the annual event that was initially scheduled to be an on-course race for April, but was moved later this year and became a virtual run due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Raymond Zapanta, assistant manager of the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, which organized the event, this year's JP Hero Run drew 613 participants with 501 of them entered in the competitive race (10K) and 112 in the 5K run. Runners were given the chance to do the single run between Nov. 20 and Dec. 20 at any course of their choice.

The Northern Mariana Islands Football Association had the most participants in the event with 109, as it had its national men's, women's and youth teams racing at the CPA Airport Field and Junior National Academy players running at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville. Tinian residents also participated as well as students from Agape Christian School.

Three of the five members of the NMI Women's National Team made it to the Top 5 of the competitive 10K race with Kaithlynn Chavez placing second (45:45) behind off-island participant Melissa Paauwe (39:31). Veteran Saipan runner Noriko Jim came in third place with her 46:11, while Chavez's teammates Khristelle Itaas (54:47) and Nathanette Blas (58:19) tounded put the Top 5.

In the non-competitive 10K women's division, NMI youth team member Aubrey Castro topped the field after checking in at 1:02:00. Mia Abuan (1:10:37) finished second and was followed by Au-

See OVER on Page 19

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
NMI football players set their timers as they head out to the course at the CPA Airport Field for the JP Hero Run Virtual Edition last Dec. 12.